MEMOIRS

OF

THE LATE

MRS. ROBINSON,

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARY ROBINSON.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

THE thundering applause that greeted me nearly overpowered all my faculties. I stood mute and bending with alarm, which did not subside till I had feebly articulated the few sentences of the first short scene, during the whole of which I had never once ventured to look at the audience.

On my return to the Green-room, I was again encouraged, as far as my looks were deemed deserving of ap-

probation; for of my powers nothing yet could be known, my fears having as it were palsied both my voice and action. The second scene being the Masquerade, I had time to collect myself. I never shall forget the sensation which rushed through my bosom when I first looked towards the pit. I beheld a gradual ascent of heads: all eyes were fixed upon me; and the sensation they conveyed was awfully impressive: but the keen, the penetrating eyes of Mr. Garrick, darting their lustre from the centre of the orchestra, were, beyond all others, the objects most conspicuous.

As I acquired courage I found the applause augment; and the night was concluded with peals of clamorous approbation. I was complimented on all sides; but the praise

of one object, whom most I wished to please, was flattering even to the extent of human vanity. I then experienced, for the first time in my life, a gratification which language could not utter. I heard one of the most fascinating men, and the most distinguished geniuses of the age, honour me with partial approbation: a new sensation seemed to awake in my bosom: I felt that emulation which the soul delights to encourage, where the attainment of fame will be pleasing to an esteemed object. I had till that period known no impulse beyond that of friendship; I had been an example of conjugal fidelity; but I had never known the perils to which the feeling heart is subjected, in an union of regard wholly uninfluenced by the affections of the soul.

The second character which I played was Amanda, in 'A Trip to Scarbro'. The play was altered from Vanburgh's 'Relapse;' and the audience, supposing it was a new piece, on finding themselves deceived, expressed a considerable degree of disapprobation. I was terrified beyond imagination, when Mrs. Yates, no longer able to bear the hissing of the audience, quitted the scene, and left me alone to encounter the critic tempest. I stood for some moments as though I had been petrified: Mr. Sheridan, from the side wing, desired me not to quit the boards: the late Duke of Cumberland, from the stage-box, bade me take courage—"It is not you, but the play, they hiss," said his Royal Highness. I curtsied; and that curtsy seemed to electrify the whole house; for a thundering peal

of encouraging applause followed,—the comedy was suffered to go on, and is to this hour a stock play at Drury-lane theatre.

The third character I played was Statira, in 'Alexander the Great.' Mr. Lacey, then one of the proprietors of Drury-lane theatre, was the hero of the night; and the part of Roxana was performed by Mrs. Melmoth. Again I was received with an *éclat* that gratified my vanity. My dress was white and blue, made after the Persian *costume*; and, though it was then singular on the stage, I wore neither a hoop nor powder; my feet were bound by sandals richly ornamented; and the whole dress was picturesque and characteristic.

Though I was always received with the most flattering approbation, the characters in which I was most po-

pular were Ophelia, Juliet, and Rosalind. Palmira was also one of my most approved representations. The last character which I played was *Sir Harry Revel*, in Lady Craven's comedy of 'The Miniature Picture;' and the epilogue song in 'The Irish Widow' was my last farewell to the labour of my profession.

Mr. Sheridan now informed me, he wished that I would accustom myself to appear in comedy: because tragedy seemed evidently, as well as my *forte*, to be my preference. At the same time he acquainted me that he wished me to perform a part in 'The School for Scandal.' I was now so unshaped, by my increasing size, that I made my excuses, informing Mr. Sheridan that probably I should be confined to my chamber at the period when his since celebrated

play would first make its appearance. He accepted the apology; and in a short time I gave to the world my second child, Sophia. I now resided in Southampton-street, Covent-garden.

Previous to this event I had my benefit night, on which I performed the part of Fanny, in 'The Clandestine Marriage.' Mr. King, the Lord Ogleby; Miss Pope, Miss Sterling; and Mrs. Heidelberg, Mrs. Hopkins.

Mr. Sheridan's attentions to me were unremitting: he took pleasure in promoting my consequence at the theatre; he praised my talents, and he interested himself in my domestic comforts. I was engaged previous to my *début*; and I received what, at that time, was considered as a handsome salary. My benefit was flatteringly attended: the boxes were filled with persons of the very highest rank

and fashion; and I looked forward with delight, both to celebrity and to fortune.

At the end of six weeks I lost my infant. She expired in my arms in convulsions, and my distress was undescribable. On the day of its dissolution, Mr. Sheridan called on me: the little sufferer was on my lap, and I was watching it with agonizing anxiety. Five months had then elapsed since Mr. Sheridan was first introduced to me; and though, during that period, I had seen many proofs of his exquisite sensibility, I never had witnessed one which so strongly impressed my mind as that of his countenance on entering my apartment: probably he has forgotten the feeling of the moment; but its impression will by me be remembered for ever.

I had not the power to speak. All I uttered was, "Beautiful little creature!" at the same time looking on my infant, and sighing with a degree of sympathetic sorrow which penetrated my soul. Had I ever heard *such a sigh* from a husband's bosom? Alas! I never knew the sweet soothing solace of wedded sympathy: I never was beloved by him whom destiny allotted to be the legal ruler of my actions. I do not condemn Mr. Robinson; I but too well know that we cannot command our affections. I only lament that he did not observe some decency in his infidelities; and that, while he gratified his *own* caprice, he forgot how much he exposed his *wife* to the most degrading mortifications.

The death of Sophia so deeply affected my spirits that I was rendered

ly incapable of appearing again that season. I therefore obtained Mr. Sheridan's permission to visit Bath, for the recovery of my repose. From Bath I went to Bristol—to *Bristol!* Why does my pen seem suddenly arrested while I write the word? I know not why, but an undefinable melancholy always follows the idea of my native birth-place. I instantly beheld the Gothic structure, the lonely cloisters, the lofty aisles, of the antique minster:—for, within a few short paces of its walls, this breast, which has never known *one year of happiness*, first palpitated on inhaling the air of this bad world! Is it within its consecrated precincts that this heart shall shortly moulder? Heaven only knows, and to its will I bow implicitly.

I transcribe this passage on the

twenty-ninth of March, 1800. I feel my health decaying, my spirit broken. I look back without regret that so many of my days are numbered; and, were it in my power to choose, I would not wish to measure them again:—but whither am I wandering? I will resume my melancholy story.

Still restless, still perplexed with painful solicitudes, I returned to London. I had not then, by many months, completed my nineteenth year. On my arrival, I took lodgings in Leicester-square. Mr. Sheridan came to see me on my return to town, and communicated the melancholy fate of Mr. Thomas Linley, the late brother of Mrs. Sheridan: he was unfortunately drowned at the Duke of Ancaster's. In a few days after Mr. Sheridan again made me a visit, with

a proposal for an engagement to play, during the summer, at Mr. Colman's theatre in the Hay-market. I had refused several offers from provincial managers, and felt an almost insurmountable aversion to the idea of strolling. Mr. Sheridan nevertheless strongly recommended to me the acceptance of Mr. Colman's offer; and I at last agreed to it, upon condition that the characters I should be expected to perform were select and limited: to this Mr. Colman readily consented.

The first part which was placed in the list was *Nancy Lovell*, in the comedy of 'The Suicide.' I received the written character, and waited for the rehearsal; but my astonishment was infinite, when I saw the name of Miss Farren* announced in the bills.

* Now Countess of Derby.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Colman, requesting an explanation. He replied, that he had promised the part to Miss Farren, who had then performed one or two seasons at the Haymarket theatre. I felt myself insulted. I insisted on Mr. Colman's fulfilling his engagement, or on giving me liberty to quit London: the latter he refused. I demanded to perform the part of Nancy Lovell. Mr. Colman was too partial to Miss Farren to hazard offending her. I refused to play till I had this first character, as by agreement, restored to me; and the summer passed without my once performing, though my salary was paid weekly and regularly.

During the following winter I performed, with increasing approbation, the following characters:

Ophelia, in Hamlet.

Viola, in Twelfth Night.
Jacintha, in The Suspicious Husband.
Fidelia, in The Plain Dealer.
Rosalind, in As You Like it.
Oriana, in The Inconstant.
Octavia, in All for Love.
Perdita, in The Winter's Tale.
Palmira, in Mahomet.
Cordelia, in King Lear.
Alinda, in The Law of Lombardy.
The Irish Widow.
Araminta, in The Old Bachelor.
Sir Harry Revel, in The Miniature Picture.
Emily, in The Runaway.
Miss Richley, in The Discovery.
Statira, in Alexander the Great.
Juliet, in Romeo and Juliet.
Amanda, in The Trip to Scarbro.'
Lady Anne, in Richard the Third.
Imogen, in Cymbeline.
Lady Macbeth, in Macbeth, &c. &c.

It was now that I began to know the perils attendant on a dramatic life. It was at this period that the most alluring temptations were held out to alienate me from the paths of domestic quiet—domestic happiness I cannot say, for it never was my destiny to know it; but I had still the consolation of an unsullied name. I had the highest female patronage, and a circle of the most respectable and partial friends.

During this period I was daily visited by my best of mothers: my youngest brother had, the preceding winter, departed for Leghorn, where my eldest had been many years established as a merchant of the first respectability.

Were I to mention the names of those who held forth the temptations of fortune at this moment of public

peril, I might create some reproaches in many families of the fashionable world. Among others who offered most liberally to purchase my indiscretion, was the late Duke of Rutland: a settlement of six hundred pounds per annum was proposed, as the means of estranging me entirely from my husband. I refused the offer. I wished to remain in the eyes of the public, deserving of its patronage. I shall not enter into a minute detail of temptations which assailed my fortitude.

The flattering and zealous attentions, which Mr. Sheridan evinced, were strikingly in contrast with the marked and increasing neglect of my husband. I now found that he supported two women in one house, in Maiden-lane, Covent-garden. The one was a figure-dancer at Drury-lane

theatre; the other a woman of professed libertinism. With these he passed all his hours that he could steal from me; and I found that my salary was at times inadequate to the expences which were incurred by an enlarged circle of new acquaintance, which Mr. Robinson had formed since my appearance in the dramatic scene. Added to this, the bond creditors became so clamorous that the whole of my Benefits were appropriated to their demands; and, on the second year after my appearance at Drury-lane theatre, Mr. Robinson once more persuaded me to make a visit at Tregunter.

I was now received with more civility, and more warmly welcomed, than I had been on any former arrival. Though the *assumed sanctity* of Miss Robinson's manners condemned

a dramatic life, the labour was deemed *profitable*, and the supposed immorality was consequently *tolerated!* However repugnant to my feelings this visit was, still I hoped that it would promote my husband's interest, and confirm his reconciliation to his father: I therefore resolved on undertaking it. I now felt that I could support myself honourably; and the consciousness of independence is the only true felicity in this world of humiliations.

Mr. Harris was now established in Tregunter-house; and several parties were formed, both at home and abroad, for my amusement. I was consulted as the very oracle of fashions: I was gazed at and examined with the most inquisitive curiosity. Mrs. Robinson, the promising young actress, was a very differ-

ent personage from Mrs. Robinson who had been overwhelmed with sorrows, and came to ask an asylum under the roof of vulgar ostentation. —I remained only a fortnight in Wales, and then returned to London, to prepare for the opening of the theatre.

We stopped at Bath in our way to Town, where Mr. Robinson met with Mr. George Brereton, with whom, at Newmarket, he had some time before become acquainted. Mr. Brereton was a man of fortune, and married to his beautiful cousin, the daughter of Major Brereton, then Master of the Ceremonies at Bath. At a former period Mr. Robinson had owed a sum of money to Mr. George Brereton, for which he had given a promissory note. On our arrival at Bath, we received a visit from this

creditor, who assured Mr. Robinson that he was in no haste for the payment of his note, and at the same time very earnestly pressed us to remain a few days in that fashionable city. We were in no hurry to return to London, having still more than three weeks holidays. We resided at the Three Tuns, one of the best inns, and Mr. Brereton was on all occasions particularly attentive.

The motive of this assiduity was at length revealed to me, by a violent and fervent declaration of love, which astonished and perplexed me. I knew that Mr. Brereton was of a most impetuous temper; that he had fought many duels; that he was capable of any outrage, and that he had my husband completely in his power. Every advance which he had the temerity to make was by me

rejected with indignation. I had not resolution to inform Mr. Robinson of his danger, and I thought that the only chance of escaping it was to set out immediately for Britol; where I wished to pass a few days previous to my return to the metropolis.

On the following morning, as we were quitting the inn in Temple-street, to visit Clifton, Mr. Robinson was arrested at the suit of Mr. George Brereton, who waited himself in an upper room, in order to see the writ executed. I forget the exact sum for which Mr. Robinson had given his promissory note; but I well remember that it was in magnitude beyond his power to pay. Our consternation was undescribable.

In a few minutes after I was informed that a Lady wished to speak with me. Concluding that it was

some old acquaintance, and happy to feel that in this perplexing dilemma I had still a friend to speak to, I followed the waiter into another room. Mr. Robinson was detained by the Sheriff's officer.

On entering the apartment I beheld Mr. George Brereton. "Well, Madam," said he, with a sarcastic smile, "you have involved your husband in a pretty embarrassment! Had you not been severe towards me, not only this paltry debt would have been cancelled, but any sum that I could command would have been at his service. He has now either to pay me, to fight me, or to go to a prison; and all because you treat me with such unexampled rigour."

I entreated him to reflect before he drove me to distraction.

"I have reflected," said he, "and

I find that you possess the power to do with me what you will. Promise to return to Bath,—to behave more kindly,—and I will this moment discharge your husband."

I burst into tears.

"You cannot be so inhuman as to propose such terms!" said I.

"The inhumanity is on your side," answered Mr. Brereton. "But I have no time to lose; I must return to Bath; my wife is dangerously ill, and I do not wish to have my name exposed in a business of this nature."

"Then for Heaven's sake release my husband;" said I. Mr. Brereton smiled as he rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to look for his carriage. I now lost all command of myself, and, with the most severe invective, condemned the infamy of his conduct. "I *will* return to Bath,"

said I, "but it shall be to expose *your* dishonourable, your barbarous machinations. I will inform that lovely wife how treacherously you have acted. I will proclaim to the world that the common arts of seduction are not sufficiently depraved for the mind of a libertine and a gamester."

I uttered these words in so loud a tone of voice that he changed colour, and desired me to be discreet and patient.

"Never while you insult me, and hold my husband in your power," said I. "You have carried outrage almost to its fullest extent: you have awakened all the pride and all the resentment of my soul; and I will proceed as I think proper."

He now endeavoured to soothe me. He assured me that he was actuated by a sincere regard for me; and that,

knowing how little my husband valued me, he thought it would be an act of kindness to estrange me from him. " His neglect of you will justify any step you may take," added he; " and it is a matter of universal astonishment that you, who upon other occasions can act with such becoming spirit, should tamely continue to bear such infidelities from a husband." I shuddered: for this plea had, in many instances, been urged as an excuse for libertine advances; and the indifference with which I was treated was, in the theatre, and in all my circle of friends, a subject of conversation.

Distressed beyond the power of utterance at this new humiliation, I paced the room with agonizing inquietude. " How little does such a husband deserve such a wife!" continued Mr. Brereton; " how taste-

less must he be, to leave such a woman for the very lowest and most degraded of the sex! Quit him, and fly with me. I am ready to make any sacrifice you demand. Shall I propose to Mr. Robinson to let you go? Shall I offer him his liberty on condition that he allows you to separate yourself from him? By his conduct he proves that he does not love you: why then labour to support him?"—I was almost frantic.

"Here, Madam," continued Mr. Brereton, after pausing four or five minutes, "here is your husband's release." So saying, he threw a written paper on the table.—"Now," added he, "I rely on your generosity."

I trembled, and was incapable of speaking. Mr. Brereton conjured me to compose my spirits, and to conceal my distress from the people

of the inn. "I will return to Bath," said he: "I shall there expect to see you." He now quitted the room. I saw him get into his chaise and drive from the inn-door. I then hastened to my husband with the discharge; and all expences of the arrest being shortly after settled, we set out for Bath.

Mr. Robinson scarcely inquired what had passed; but I assured him that my persuasions had produced so sudden a change in Mr. Brereton's conduct. I said that I hoped he would never again place his freedom in the hands of a gamester, or his wife's repose in the power of a libertine. He seemed insensible of the peril attending both the one and the other.

Expecting letters by the post, we waited the following day, which was Sunday, at Bath: though, in order to

avoid Mr. Brereton, we removed to the White Lion inn. But what was my astonishment, in the afternoon, when, standing at the window, I saw Mr. George Brereton walking on the opposite side of the way, with his wife and her no less lovely sister! I now found that the story of her dangerous illness was untrue, and I flattered myself that I was not seen before I retired from the window.

We now sat down to dinner, and in a few minutes Mr. George Brereton was announced by the waiter. He coldly bowed to me, and instantly made a thousand apologies to Mr. Robinson; declared that he had paid the note away; that he was menaced for the money; and that he came to Bristol, though too late, to prevent the arrest which had happened. Mr. Robinson sceptically replied

that it was now of little importance; and Mr. Brereton took his leave, saying that he should have the honour of seeing us again in the evening. We did not wait for his company; but, immediately after dinner, set out for London.

On my arrival in town I saw Mr. Sheridan, whose manner had lost nothing of its interesting attention. He continued to visit me very frequently, and always gave me the most friendly counsel. He knew that I was not properly protected by Mr. Robinson; but he was too generous to build his gratification on the detraction of another. The happiest moments I then knew were passed in the society of this distinguished being. He saw me ill-bestowed upon a man who neither loved nor valued me: he lamented my destiny, but with such delicate propriety, that it consoled while

it revealed to me the unhappiness of my situation. On my return to town, the Duke of Rutland renewed his solicitations. I also received the most unbounded professions of esteem and admiration from several other persons. Among the list I was addressed with proposals of a libertine nature by a *royal* Duke, a *lofty* Marquis, and a City Merchant of considerable fortune, conveyed through the medium of milliners, mantua-makers, &c. &c. Just at this period, my eldest brother visited England: but, such was his unconquerable aversion to my profession as an actress, that he only once, during a residence of some months in London, attempted to see me perform. He then only attempted it: for, on my advancing on the boards, he started from his seat in the stage-box, and instantly quitted the theatre. My dear mother had no

less a dislike to the pursuit: she never beheld me on the stage but with a painful regret. Fortunately, my father remained some years out of England; so that he never saw me in my professional character.

My popularity increasing every night that I appeared, my prospects, both of fame and affluence, began to brighten. We now hired the house which is situated between the Hummums and the Bedford Arms, in Covent-garden: it had been built (I believe) by Doctor Fisher, who married the widow of the celebrated actor Powell: but Mr. Robinson took the premises of Mrs. Mattocks, of Covent-garden theatre. The house was particularly convenient in every respect; but, above all, on account of its vicinity to Drury-lane. Here I hoped to enjoy, at least, some

cheerful days, as I found that my circle of friends increased almost hourly.

One of those who paid me most attention was Sir John Lade. The good-natured baronet, who was then just of age, was our constant visitor; and cards contributed to beguile those evenings that were not devoted to dramatic labour. Mr. Robinson played more deeply than was discreet; but he was, at the end of a few weeks, a very considerable winner.

In proportion as play obtained its influence over my husband's mind, his small degree of remaining regard for me visibly decayed. We now had horses, a phæton and ponies; and my fashions in dress were followed with flattering avidity. My house was thronged with visitors, and my morning levees were crowded so

that I could scarcely find a quiet hour for study. My brother by this time had returned to Italy.

Mr. Sheridan was still my most esteemed of friends. He advised me with the gentlest anxiety, and he warned me of the danger which expence would produce, and which might interrupt the rising progress of my dramatic reputation. He saw the trophies which flattery strewed in my way; and he lamented that I was on every side surrounded with temptations. There was a something beautifully sympathetic in every word he uttered: his admonitions seemed as if dictated by a prescient power, which told him that I was *destined to be deceived!*

Situated as I was at this time, the effort was difficult to avoid the society of Mr. Sheridan. He was manager

of the theatre. I could not shun seeing and conversing with him, at rehearsals and behind the scenes; and his conversation was always such as to fascinate and charm me. The brilliant reputation which he had justly acquired for superior talents, and the fame which was completed by his celebrated *School for Scandal*, had now rendered him so admired that all ranks of people courted his society. The Green-room was frequented by nobility, and men of genius: among these were Mr. Fox and the Earl of Derby. The stage was now enlightened by the very best critics, and embellished by the very highest talents; and it is not a little remarkable that the drama was uncommonly productive, and the theatre more than usually attended, during that season when the principal dra-

matic characters were performed by women under the age of twenty. Among these were Miss Farren (now Lady Derby), Miss Walpole, (now Mrs. Atkins), Miss P. Hopkins, (now Mrs. John Kemble), and myself.

I had then been married more than four years, my daughter Maria Elizabeth nearly three years old. I had been then seen, and known, at all public places from the age of fifteen; yet I knew as little of the world's deceptions as though I had been educated in the deserts of Siberia. I believed every woman friendly, every man sincere, till I discovered proofs that their characters were deceptive.

I had now performed two seasons, in tragedy and comedy, with Miss Farren and the late Mr. Henderson. My first appearance in Palmira (in Mahomet) was with the Zaphna of

Mr. J. Bannister, the preceding year; and, though the extraordinary comic powers of this excellent actor and amiable man have established his reputation as a comedian, his first essay in tragedy was considered as a night of the most distinguished promise. The Duchess of Devonshire still honoured me with her patronage and friendship, and I also possessed the esteem of several respectable and distinguished females.

The play of The WINTER'S TALE was this season commanded by their Majesties. I never had performed before the royal family; and the first character in which I was destined so to appear was that of PERDITA. I had frequently played the part, both with the Hermione of Mrs. Hartley and of Miss Farren: but I felt a strange degree of alarm when I found my

name announced to perform it before the royal family.

In the Green-room I was rallied on the occasion; and Mr. Smith, whose gentlemanly manners and enlightened conversation rendered him an ornament to the profession, who performed the part of Leontes, laughingly exclaimed, "By Jove, Mrs. Robinson, you will make a conquest of the Prince; for to-night you look handsomer than ever." I smiled at the unmerited compliment; and little foresaw the vast variety of events that would arise from that night's exhibition!

As I stood in the wing opposite the Prince's box, waiting to go on the stage, Mr. Ford, the manager's son, and now a respectable defender of the laws, presented a friend who accompanied him: this friend was

Lord Viscount Malden, now Earl of Essex.

We entered into conversation during a few minutes, the Prince of Wales all the time observing us, and frequently speaking to Colonel (now *General*) Lake, and to the Honourable Mr. Legge, brother to Lord Lewisham, who was in waiting on his Royal Highness. I hurried through the first scene, not without much embarrassment, owing to the fixed attention with which the Prince of Wales honoured me. Indeed, some flattering remarks which were made by his Royal Highness met my ear as I stood near his box, and I was overwhelmed with confusion.

The Prince's particular attention was observed by every one, and I was again rallied at the end of the play. On the last curtsy, the royal

family condescendingly returned a bow to the performers; but, just as the curtain was falling, my eyes met those of the Prince of Wales; and, with a look that I *never shall forget*, he gently inclined his head a second time: I felt the compliment, and blushed my gratitude.

During the entertainment, Lord Malden never ceased conversing with me! He was young, pleasing, and perfectly accomplished. He remarked the particular applause which the Prince had bestowed on my performance, said a thousand civil things, and detained me in conversation till the evening's performance was concluded.

I was now going to my chair, which waited, when I met the royal family crossing the stage. I was again honoured with a very marked and

low bow from the Prince of Wales. On my return home, I had a party to supper; and the whole conversation centred in encomiums on the person, graces, and amiable manners, of the illustrious heir apparent.

Within two or three days of this time, Lord Malden made me a morning visit: Mr. Robinson was not at home, and I received him rather auk wardly. But his Lordship's embarrassment far exceeded mine: he attempted to speak, paused, hesitated, apologized: I knew not why. He hoped I would pardon him; that I would not mention something he had to communicate; that I would consider the peculiar delicacy of his situation, and then act as I thought proper.—I could not comprehend his meaning, and therefore requested that he would be explicit.

After some moments of evident rumination, he tremblingly drew a small letter from his pocket. I took it, and knew not what to say. It was addressed to PERDITA. I smiled, I believe, rather sarcastically, and opened the *billet*. It contained only a few words, but those expressive of more than common civility: they were signed, FLORIZEL.*

"Well, my Lord, and what does this mean?" said I, half angry.

"Can you not guess the writer?" said Lord Malden.

"Perhaps yourself, my Lord?" cried I, gravely.

"Upon my honour, no," said the Viscount. "I should not have dared so to address you on so short an acquaintance."

* Those who have read THE WINTER'S TALE will know the significance of these adopted names.

I pressed him to tell me from whom the letter came.—He again hesitated: he seemed confused, and sorry that he had undertaken to deliver it. "I hope that I shall not forfeit your good opinion," said he, "but"——

"But what, my Lord?"

"I could not refuse,—for the letter is from the Prince of Wales."

I was astonished: I confess that I was agitated; but I was also somewhat sceptical as to the truth of Lord Malden's assertion. I returned a formal and a doubtful answer; and his Lordship shortly after took his leave.

A thousand times did I read this short but expressive letter: still I did not implicitly believe that it was written by the Prince: I rather considered it as an experiment made by Lord Malden, either on my vanity or

propriety of conduct. On the next evening the Viscount repeated his visit: we had a card-party of six or seven, and the Prince of Wales was again the subject of unbounded panegyric. Lord Malden spoke of his Royal Highness's manners as the most polished and fascinating; of his temper, as the most engaging; and of his mind, the most replete with every amiable sentiment. I heard these praises, and my heart beat with conscious pride, while memory turned to the partial but delicately respectful letter, which I had received on the preceding morning.

The next day, Lord Malden brought me a second letter. He assured me that the Prince was most unhappy lest I should be offended at his conduct; and that he conjured me to go that night to the Oratorio,

where he would by some signal convince me that he was the writer of the letters, supposing I was still sceptical as to their authencity.

I went to the Oratorio; and, on taking my seat in the balcony-box, the Prince almost instantaneously observed me. He held the printed bill before his face, and drew his hand across his forehead; still fixing his eyes on me. I was confused, and knew not what to do. My husband was with me, and I was fearful of his observing what passed. Still the Prince continued to make signs, such as moving his hand on the edge of the box as if writing, then speaking to the Duke of York (then Bishop of Osnaburg) who also looked towards me with particular attention.

I now observed one of the gentlemen in waiting bring the Prince a

glass of water: before he raised it to his lips, he looked at me. So marked was his Royal Highness's conduct that many of the audience observed it: several persons in the pit directed their gaze at the place where I sat; and, on the following day, one of the diurnal prints observed that there was one passage in Dryden's Ode which seemed particularly interesting to the Prince of Wales, who

> "Gazed on the fair
> "Who caused his care,
> "And sigh'd, and look'd, and sigh'd again."

However flattering it might have been, to female vanity, to know that the most admired and most accomplished Prince in Europe was devotedly attached to me; however dangerous to the heart such idolatry as his Royal Highness, during many

months, professed in almost daily letters, which were conveyed to me by Lord Malden, still I declined any interview with his Royal Highness. I was not insensible to all his powers of attraction: I thought him one of the most amiable of men. There was a beautiful ingenuousness in his language, a warm and enthusiastic adoration expressed in every letter, which interested and charmed me. During the whole Spring, till the theatre closed, this correspondence continued; every day giving me some new assurance of inviolable affection.

After we had corresponded some months without ever speaking to each other (for I still declined meeting his Royal Highness, from a dread of the *éclat* which such a connection would produce, and the fear of injuring him in the opinion of his royal relatives)

I received, through the hands of Lord Malden, the Prince's portrait in miniature, painted by the late Mr. Meyer. This picture is now in my possession. Within the case was a small heart cut in paper, which I also have: on one side was written, "*Je ne change qu'en mourant.*" On the other, "*Unalterable to my Perdita through life.*"

During many months of confidential correspondence, I always offered his Royal Highness the best advice in my power; I disclaimed every sordid and interested thought; I recommended to him to be patient till he should become his own master; to wait till he knew more of my mind and manners, before he engaged in a public attachment to me; and, above all, to do nothing that might incur the displeasure of his Royal Highness's family. I entreated him to re-

collect that he was young, and led on by the impetuosity of passion: that, should I consent to quit my profession and my husband, I should be thrown entirely on his mercy. I strongly pictured the temptations to which beauty would expose him; the many arts that would be practised to undermine me in his affections; the public abuse which calumny and envy would heap upon me; and the misery I should suffer if, after I had given him every proof of confidence, he should change in his sentiments towards me. To all this I received repeated assurances of inviolable affection; and I most firmly believe that his Royal Highness meant what he professed: indeed, his soul was too ingenuous, his mind too liberal, and his heart too susceptible to deceive premeditately, or to harbour, even for a

moment the idea of a deliberate deception.

At every interview with Lord Malden, I perceived that he regretted the task he had undertaken; but he assured me that the Prince was almost frantic, whenever he suggested a wish to decline interfering. Once I remember his Lordship's telling me that the late Duke of Cumberland had made him a visit early in the morning, at his house in Clarges-street, informing him that the prince was most wretched on my account, and imploring him to continue his services only a short time longer. The Prince's establishment was then in agitation: at this period his Royal Highness still resided in Buckingham-house.

A proposal was now made that I should meet his Royal Highness, at his apartments, in the disguise of

male attire. I was accustomed to perform in that dress, and the Prince had seen me (I believe) in the character of the 'Irish Widow.' To this plan I decidedly objected. The indelicacy of such a step, as well as the danger of detection, made me shrink from the proposal. My refusal threw his Royal Highness into the most distressing agitation, as was expressed by the letter which I received on the following morning. Lord Malden again lamented that he had engaged himself in the intercourse; and declared that he had himself conceived so violent a passion for me that he was the most miserable and unfortunate of mortals.

During this period, though Mr. Robinson was a stranger to my epistolary intercourse with the Prince, his conduct was entirely neglectful. He

was perfectly careless respecting my fame and my repose, passed his leisure hours with the most abandoned women, and even my own servants complained of his illicit advances. I remember one, who was plain even to ugliness: she was short, ill-made, squalid, and dirty: once, on my return from a rehearsal, I found that this woman was locked with my husband in my chamber. I also knew that Mr. Robinson continued his connection with a female who lodged in Maiden-lane, and who was only one of the few that proved his domestic apostacy.

His indifference naturally produced an alienation of esteem on my side, and the increasing adoration of the most enchanting of mortals hourly reconciled my mind to the idea of a separation. The unbounded assur-

ances of lasting affection which I received from his Royal Highness in many scores of the most eloquent letters, the contempt which I experienced from my husband, and the perpetual labour which I underwent for his support, at length began to weary my fortitude. Still I was reluctant to become the theme of public animadversion; and still I remonstrated with my husband, on the unkindness of his conduct. * * *
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The Narrative of Mrs. Robinson closes here.

CONTINUATION

BY A FRIEND.

AMONG those persons, who have at various periods attracted the attention of the public, there are few whose virtues have been so little known, or whose characters have been so unfairly estimated, as the subject of the preceding Memoir. To compress within narrow limits the numerous circumstances, by which the later years of Mrs. Robinson's life were chequered, will be a task of no little difficulty. The earlier periods of her existence, rendered more interesting as narrated by her own pen, have doubtless been justly appretiated by the reflecting and candid reader, whose sympathy they could not fail to awaken. That

she lived not to conclude the history of a life, scarcely less eventful than unfortunate, cannot but afford a subject of sincere regret.

The conflicts which shook the mind, and the passions which succeeded to each other in the breast of Mrs. Robinson, at the period when her narrative closes, a crisis perhaps the most important in her life, may be more easily conceived than described. A laborious though captivating profession, the profits of which were unequal to the expences of her establishment, and the assiduities of her illustrious lover, to whom she naturally looked for protection, combined to divide her attention and bewilder her inexperienced mind. The partiality of her royal admirer had begun to excite observation, to awaken curiosity, and to provoke

the malignant passions, which, under an affected concern for decorum, assumed the guise of virtue. The daily prints teemed with hints of the favour of Mrs. Robinson with "one whose manners were resistless, and whose smile was victory." These circumstances, added to the constant devoirs of Lord Malden, whose attentions were as little understood as maliciously interpreted, conspired to distract a young creature, whose exposed situation, whose wavering and unformed character, rendered her but too obnoxious to a thousand errors and perils.

To terminate her correspondence with the Prince appeared the most painful remedy that could be adopted, by a heart fascinated with his accomplishments, and soothed by his professions of inviolable attachment.

She was aware that, in the eye of the world, the reputation of the wife is supposed unsullied while the husband, enduring passively his dishonour, gives to her the sanction of his protection. The circles of fashion afforded more than one instance of this obliging acquiescence in matrimonial turpitude. Could Mrs. Robinson have reconciled it to her own feelings to remain under the roof of her husband, whose protection she had forfeited, and to add insult to infidelity, the attentions of her illustrious admirer might have given to her popularity an additional éclat. Neither might her husband have suffered in his worldly prospects, from being to the motives of his royal visitor a little complaisantly blind. But her ingenuous nature would not permit her to render the man, for whom

she had once felt an affection, an object of ridicule and contempt. She determined, therefore, to brave the world ; and, for a support against its censures, to rely on the protection and friendship of him to whom she sacrificed its respect.

The managers of Drury-lane theatre, suspecting that Mrs. Robinson purposed at the conclusion of the season to withdraw from the stage, omitted no means that might tend to induce her to renew her engagements. With this view, they offered a considerable advance to her salary, while to their solicitations she returned undecisive answers. Hourly rising in a profession to which she was enthusiastically attached, the public plaudits, which her appearence never failed to excite, were too gratifying to be relinquished without regret.

During this irresolution, she was persecuted by numerous anonymous letters, which she continued to treat with derision or contempt. The correspondence between Mrs. Robinson and the Prince had hitherto been merely epistolary. This intercourse had lasted several months, Mrs. Robinson not having acquired sufficient courage to venture a personal interview, and bid defiance to the reproaches of the world.

At length, after many alternations of feeling, an interview with her royal lover was consented to by Mrs. Robinson, and proposed, by the management of Lord Malden, to take place at his lordship's residence in Dean-street, May-fair. But the restricted situation of the Prince, controlled by a rigid tutor, rendered this project of difficult execution.

A visit to Buckingham-house was then mentioned; to which Mrs. Robinson positively objected as a rash attempt, abounding in peril to her august admirer. Lord Malden being again consulted, it was determined that the Prince should meet Mrs. Robinson for a few moments at Kew, on the banks of the Thames, opposite to the old palace, then the summer residence of the elder Princes. For an account of this incident, an extract from a letter of Mrs. Robinson, written some years afterwards to a valued and since deceased friend, who, during the period of these events, resided in America, may not be unacceptable to the reader. The date of this letter is in 1783.

"At length an evening was fixed for this long dreaded interview. Lord

Malden and myself dined at the inn on the island between Kew and Brentford. We waited the signal for crossing the river, in a boat which had been engaged for the purpose. Heaven can witness how many conflicts my agitated heart endured at this most important moment! I admired the Prince; I felt grateful for his affection. He was the most engaging of created beings. I had corresponded with him during many months, and his eloquent letters, the exquisite sensibility which breathed through every line, his ardent professions of adoration, had combined to shake my feeble resolution. The handkerchief was waved on the opposite shore; but the signal was, by the dusk of the evening, rendered almost imperceptible. Lord Malden took my

hand; I stepped into the boat, and in a few minutes we landed before the iron gates of old Kew palace. The interview was but of a moment. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York (then Bishop of Osnaburg) were walking down the avenue. They hastened to meet us. A few words, and those scarcely articulate, were uttered by the Prince, when a noise of people approaching from the palace startled us. The moon was now rising; and the idea of being overheard, or of his Royal Highness being seen out at so unusual an hour, terrified the whole group. After a few more words of the most affectionate nature uttered by the Prince, we parted, and Lord Malden and myself returned to the island. The Prince never quitted the avenue, nor the presence of the Duke of York, during

the whole of this short meeting. Alas! my friend, if my mind was before influenced by esteem, it was now awakened to the most enthusiastic admiration. The rank of the Prince no longer chilled into awe that being, who now considered him as the lover and the friend. The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten.

"Many and frequent were the interviews which afterwards took place at this romantic spot: our walks sometimes continued till past midnight; the Duke of York and Lord Malden were always of the party; our conversation was composed of general topics. The Prince had,

from his infancy, been wholly secluded, and naturally took much pleasure in conversing about the busy world, its manners and pursuits, characters and scenery. Nothing could be more delightful or more rational than our midnight preambulations. I always wore a dark coloured habit: the rest of our party generally wrapped themselves in great coats to disguise them, excepting the Duke of York, who almost universally alarmed us by the display of a *buff* coat, the most conspicuous colour he could have selected for an adventure of this nature. The polished and fascinating ingenuousness of his Royal Highness's manners contributed not a little to enliven our *promenades*. He sung with exquisite taste; and the tones of his voice, breaking on the silence of the night,

have often appeared to my entranced senses like more than mortal melody. Often have I lamented the distance which destiny had placed between us: how would my soul have idolized such a *husband!* Alas! how often, in the ardent enthusiasm of my soul, have I formed the wish that being were *mine alone!* to whom partial millions were to look up for protection.

"The Duke of York was now on the eve of quitting the country for Hanover: the Prince was also on the point of receiving his first establishment; and the apprehension that his attachment to a married woman might injure his Royal Highness, in the opinion of the world, rendered the caution, which we invariably observed, of the utmost importance. A considerable time

elapsed in these delightful scenes of visionary happiness. The Prince's attachment seemed to increase daily, and I considered myself as the most blest of human beings. During some time, we had enjoyed our meetings in the neighbourhood of Kew; and I now only looked forward to the adjusting of his Royal Highness's establishment for the public avowal of our mutual attachment.

"I had relinquished my profession. The last night of my appearance on the stage, I represented the character of Sir Harry Revel, in the comedy of 'The Miniature Picture,' written by Lady Craven*; and the Irish Widow. On entering the Green-room, I informed Mr. Moody,

* Now Margravine of Anspach.

who played in the farce, that I should appear no more after that night; and, endeavouring to smile while I sung, I repeated,

> 'Oh joy to you all in full measure,
> So wishes and prays Widow Brady!'

which were the last lines of my song in 'The Irish Widow.' This effort to conceal the emotion I felt, on quitting a profession I enthusiastically loved, was of short duration; and I burst into tears on my appearance. My regret, at recollecting that I was treading for the last time the boards where I had so often received the most gratifying testimonies of public approbation, where mental exertion had been emboldened by private worth, that I was flying from a happy certainty, perhaps to pursue the phantom disappointment, nearly

overwhelmed my faculties, and for some time deprived me of the power of articulation. Fortunately, the person on the stage with me had to begin the scene, which allowed me time to collect myself. I went, however, mechanically dull through the business of the evening; and, notwithstanding the cheering expressions and applause of the audience, I was several times near fainting.

"The daily prints now indulged the malice of my enemies by the most scandalous paragraphs, respecting the Prince of Wales and myself. I found it was too late to stop the hourly augmenting torrent of abuse, that was poured upon me from all quarters. Whenever I appeared in public, I was overwhelmed by the gazing of the multitude. I was frequently obliged to quit Ranelagh,

owing to the crowd which staring curiosity had assembled round my box; and, even in the streets of the metropolis, I scarcely ventured to enter a shop without experiencing the greatest inconvenience. Many hours have I waited till the crowd dispersed, which surrounded my carriage in expectation of my quitting the shop. I cannot suppress a smile at the absurdity of such proceeding, when I remember that, during nearly three seasons, I was almost every night upon the stage, and that I had then been nearly five years with Mr. Robinson at every fashionable place of entertainment. You, my dear Sir, in your quiet haunts of transatlantic simplicity, will find some difficulty in reconciling these things to your mind—these unaccountable instances of national absurdity. Yet,

so it is. I am well assured that, were a being possessed of more than human endowments to visit this country, it would experience indifference, if not total neglect, while a less worthy mortal might be worshipped as the idol of the day, if whispered into notoriety by the comments of the multitude. But, thank Heaven! my heart was not formed in the mould of callous effrontery. I shuddered at the gulf before me, and felt small gratification in the knowledge of having taken a step which many, who condemned, would have been no less willing to imitate, had they been placed in the same situation.

"Previous to my first interview with his Royal Highness, in one of his letters, I was astonished to find a bond of the most solemn and binding nature, containing a promise of

the sum of twenty thousand pounds, to be paid at the period of his Royal Highness's coming of age.

"This paper was signed by the Prince, and sealed with the royal arms. It was expressed in terms so liberal, so voluntary, and so marked by true affection, that I had scarcely power to read it. My tears, excited by the most agonizing conflicts, obscured the letters, and nearly blotted out those sentiments which will be impressed upon my mind till the latest period of my existence. Still I felt shocked and mortified at the indelicate idea of entering into any pecuniary engagements with a Prince on whose establishment I relied for the enjoyment of all that would render life desirable. I was surprised at receiving it: the idea of interest had never entered my mind: secure in the possession of

his heart, I had in that delightful certainty counted all my future treasure. I had refused many splendid gifts which his Royal Highness had proposed ordering for me, at Grey's and other jewellers. The Prince presented to me a few trifling ornaments, in the whole their value not exceeding one hundred guineas. Even these, on our separation, I returned to his Royal Highness through the hands of General Lake.

"The period now approached that was to destroy all the fairy visions, which had filled my mind with dreams of happiness. At the moment when every thing was preparing for his Royal Highness's establishment, when I looked impatiently for the arrival of that day on which I might behold my adored friend gracefully receiving the acclamations of his

future subjects, when I might enjoy the public protection of that being for whom I gave up all, I received a letter from his Royal Highness, a cold and unkind letter—briefly informing me that '*we must meet no more!*'

"And now, my friend, suffer me to call GOD to witness, that I was unconscious why this decision had taken place in his Royal Highness's mind: only two days previous to this letter being written I had seen the Prince at Kew, and his affection appeared to be boundless as it was undiminished.

"Amazed, afflicted beyond the power of utterance, I wrote immediately to his Royal Highness, and requiring an explanation. He remained silent. Again I wrote, but received no elucidation of this most cruel and extraordinary mystery. The Prince was then at Windsor. I set out in a

small pony phæton, wretched, and unaccompanied by any one except my postillion (a child of nine years of age). It was nearly dark when we quitted Hyde Park Corner. On my arrival at Hounslow, the inn-keeper informed me that every carriage which had passed the heath for the last ten nights had been attacked and rifled. I confess the idea of personal danger had no terrors for my mind, in the state it then was; and the possibility of annihilation, divested of the crime of suicide, encouraged rather than diminished my determination of proceeding. We had scarcely reached the middle of the heath when my horses were startled by the sudden appearance of a man, rushing from the side of the road. The boy on perceiving him instantly spurred his pony, and, by a sudden bound of our light vehicle, the ruffian missed his grasp

at the front rein. We now proceeded at full speed, while the footpad ran endeavouring to overtake us. At length, my horses fortunately outrunning the perseverance of the assailant, we reached the first Magpie, a small inn on the heath, in safety. The alarm, which, in spite of my resolution, this adventure had created, was augmented on my recollecting, for the first time, that I had then in my black stock a brilliant stud of very considerable value, which could only have been possessed by the robber by strangling the wearer.

"If my heart palpitated with joy, at my escape from assassination, a circumstance soon after occurred that did not tend to quiet my emotion. This was the appearance of Mr. H. Meynel and Mrs. A*******. My foreboding soul instantly beheld a rival, and, with jealous eagerness, inter-

preted the hitherto inexplicable conduct of the Prince, from his having frequently expressed his wish to know that lady.

"On my arrival, the Prince would not see me. My agonies were now undescribable. I consulted with Lord Malden and the Duke of Dorset, whose honourable mind and truly disinterested friendship had, on many occasions, been exemplified towards me. They were both at a loss to divine any cause of this sudden change in the Prince's feelings. The Prince of Wales had hitherto assiduously sought opportunities to distinguish me more publicly than was prudent, in his Royal Highness's situation. This was in the month of August. On the fourth of the preceding June, I went, by his desire, into the Chamberlain's box at the

birth-night ball: the distressing observation of the circle was drawn towards the part of the box in which I sat, by the marked and injudicious attentions of his Royal Highness. I had not been arrived many minutes before I witnessed a singular species of fashionable coquetry. Previous to his Highness's beginning his minuet, I perceived a woman of high rank select from the *bouquet*, which she wore, two rose buds, which she gave to the Prince, as he afterwards informed me, 'emblematical of herself and him:' I observed his Royal Highness immediately beckon to a nobleman*, who has since formed a part of his establishment, and, looking most earnestly at me, whisper a few words, at the same time presenting to him his newly acquired trophy. In a few

* The Earl of C.

moments Lord C. entered the Chamberlain's box, and, giving the rose-buds into my hands, informed me that he was commissioned by the Prince to do so. I placed them in my bosom, and, I confess, felt proud of the power by which I thus publicly mortified an exalted rival. His Royal Highness now avowedly distinguished me at all public places of entertainment; at the King's hunt, near Windsor, at the reviews, and at the theatres. The Prince only seemed happy in evincing his affection towards me.

"How terrible then was the change to my feelings! And I again most SOLEMNLY REPEAT, that I was totally ignorant of any JUST CAUSE for so sudden an alteration.

"My 'good-natured friends' now carefully informed me of the multitude of secret enemies, who were

ever employed in estranging the Prince's mind from me. So fascinating so illustrious a lover could not fail to excite the envy of my own sex. Women of all descriptions were emulous of attracting his Royal Highness's attention. Alas! I had neither *rank* nor power to oppose such adversaries. Every engine of female malice was set in motion, to destroy my repose; and every petty calumny was repeated with tenfold embellishments. Tales of the most infamous and glaring falsehood were invented; and I was again assailed by pamphlets, by paragraphs, by caricatures, and all the artillery of slander, while the only being to whom I then looked up for protection was so situated as to be unable to afford it.

"Thus perplexed, I wrote to you, my friend, and implored your advice. But you were far away: your delight-

ed soul was absorbed in cherishing the plant of human liberty, which has since blossomed with independent splendour over your happy provinces. Eagerly did I wait for the arrival of the packet, but no answer was returned. In the anguish of my soul, I once more addressed the Prince of Wales. I complained, perhaps too vehemently of his injustice; and of the calumnies which had been by my enemies fabricated against me, of the falsehood of which he was but too sensible. I conjured him to render me justice. He did so: he wrote me a most eloquent letter, disclaiming the causes alleged by a calumniating world, and fully acquitting me of the charges which had been propagated to destroy me.

"I resided now in Cork-street, Burlington-gardens. The house,

which was neat, but by no means splendid, had recently been fitted up for the reception of the Countess of Derby, on her separation from her lord. My situation now every hour became more irksome. The Prince still unkindly persisted in withdrawing himself from my society. I was now deeply involved in debt, which I despaired of ever having the power to discharge. I had quitted both my husband and my profession:—the retrospect was dreadful!

"My estrangement from the Prince was now the theme of public animadversion, while the newly invigorated shafts of my old enemies, the daily prints, were again hurled upon my defenceless head with ten fold fury.——The regrets

of Mr. Robinson, now that he had *lost* me, became insupportable;—he constantly wrote to me in the language of unbounded affection; nor did he fail, when we met, to express his agony at our separation, and even a wish for our re-union.

"I had, at one period, resolved on returning to my profession; but some friends, whom I consulted, dreaded that the public would not suffer my re-appearance on the stage. This idea intimidated me, and precluded my efforts for that independence of which my romantic credulity had robbed me. I was thus fatally induced to relinquish what would have proved an ample and honourable resource for myself and my child. My debts accumulated to near seven thousand pounds. My creditors, whose insulting illiberality could only be equalled

by their unbounded impositions, hourly assailed me.

"I was, in the mean time, wholly neglected by the Prince, while the assiduities of Lord Malden daily increased. I had no other friend on whom I could rely for assistance or protection. When I say protection, I would not be understood to mean *pecuniary* assistance, Lord Malden being, at the time alluded to, even poorer than myself: the death of his lordship's grandmother, Lady Frances Coningsby, had not then placed him above the penury of his own small income.

"Lord Malden's attention to me again exposed him to all the humiliation of former periods. The Prince assured me once more of his wishes to renew our former friendship and affection, and urged me to meet him at the house of Lord Malden in

Clarges-street. I was at this period little less than frantic, deeply involved in debt, persecuted by my enemies, and perpetually reproached by my relations. I would joyfully have resigned an existence now become to me an intolerable burthen; yet my pride was not less than my sorrow, and I resolved, whatever my heart might suffer, to wear a placid countenance when I met the inquiring glances of my triumphant enemies.

"After much hesitation, by the advice of Lord Malden, I consented to meet his Royal Highness. He accosted me with every appearance of tender attachment, declaring that he had never for one moment ceased to love me—but, that I had many concealed enemies, who were exerting every effort to undermine me. We passed some hours in the most friendly

and delightful conversation, and I began to flatter myself that all our differences were adjusted—But what words can express my surprise and chagrin, when, on meeting his Royal Highness *the very next day* in Hyde Park, he turned his head to avoid seeing me, and even affected *not to know me!*

"Overwhelmed by this blow, my distress knew no limits. Yet *Heaven* can witness the truth of my assertion, even in this moment of complete despair, when oppression bowed me to the earth, I blamed not the Prince. I did then, and ever shall, consider his mind as nobly and honourably organized; nor could I teach myself to believe that a heart, the seat of so many virtues, could possibly become inhuman and unjust. I had been taught from my infancy to believe that elevated stations are surrounded by delu-

sive visions, which glitter but to dazzle, like an unsubstantial meteor, and flatter to betray. With legions of these phantoms it has been my fate to encounter, I have been unceasingly marked by their persecutions, and shall at length become their victim."

Here the narrative of Mrs. Robinson breaks off, with some reflections to which the recital had given rise. Though diligent search has been made to elucidate the obscurity in which the preceding events are involved, but little information has been gained. All that can be learned with certainty, is her final separation from the Prince of Wales, in the year 1781.

The genius and engaging manners of Mrs. Robinson, who was still very young, had procured her the friendship of many of the most enlightened

men of this age and country: her house was the *rendezvous* of talents. While yet unconscious of the powers of her mind, which had scarcely then unfolded itself, she was honoured with the acquaintance and esteem of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mess. Sheridan, Burke, Henderson, Wilkes, Sir John Elliot, &c. men of distinguished talents and character. But, though surrounded by the wise, the witty, and the gay, her mind, naturally pensive, was still devoured by secret sorrow; neither could the blandishments of flattery, nor the soothings of friendship, extract the arrow that rankled in her heart. Involved beyond the power of extrication, she determined on quitting England, and making a tour to Paris.

To desert her country, to fly like a wretched fugitive, or to become a vic-

tim to the malice and swell the triumph of her enemies, were the only alternatives that seemed to present themselves. Flight was humiliating and dreadful; but to remain in England was impracticable. The terrors and struggles of her mind became almost intolerable, and nearly deprived her of reason. The establishment of the Prince had now taken place: to him, for whom she had made every sacrifice, and to whom she owed her present embarrassments, she conceived herself entitled to appeal for redress. She wrote to his Royal Highness, but her letter remained unanswered. The business was at length submitted to the arbitration of Mr. Fox; and, in 1783, her claims were adjusted by the grant of an annuity of five hundred pounds: the moiety of which was to descend to her daugh-

ter at her decease. This settlement was to be considered as an equivalent for the bond of twenty thousand pounds, given by the Prince to Mrs. Robinson, to be paid on his establishment, as a consideration for the *resignation of a lucrative profession, at the particular request of his Royal Highness.* To many persons, the assurance of an independence would have operated as a consolation for the sufferings and difficulties by which it had been procured; but the spirit of Mrs. Robinson bent not to a situation, which the delicacy of her feelings led her to consider as a splendid degradation.

About this period Mrs. Robinson, notwithstanding the change in her affairs, determined to visit Paris, to amuse her mind, and beguile her thoughts from the recollection of past

scenes. Having procured letters of introduction to some agreeable French families, and also to Sir John Lambert, resident English banker at Paris, she quitted London, with the resolution of passing two months in the gay and brilliant metropolis of France. Sir John Lambert, on being informed of her arrival, exerted himself to procure for her commodious apartments, *a remise*, a box at the opera, with all the fashionable and expensive et ceteras with which an inexperienced English traveller is immediately provided.

This venerable *chevalier* united to the cordiality of the English character the *bienfaisance* of a Frenchman: every hour was devoted to the amusement of his admired guest, who came to him highly recommended. Parties were, with the most flattering assiduity, formed for the different

spectacles and places of public entertainment. A brilliant assemblage of illustrious visitors failed not to grace at the opera the box of *la belle Angloise*.

A short time after the arrival of Mrs. Robinson at Paris, the Duke of Orleans and his gallant friend and associate, the Duke de Lauzun (afterwards Duke de Biron) were presented to her by Sir John Lambert. This unfortunate Prince, with all the volatility of the national character, disgraced human nature by his vices, while the elegance of his manners rendered him a model to his contemporaries.

The Duke of Orleans immediately professed himself devoted to the fair stranger. His libertine manners, and the presumption with which he declared his determination to triumph over the heart of Mrs. Robinson, assisted to

defend her against him ; and, while he failed to dazzle her imagination by his magnificence, he disgusted her by his *hauteur*.

The most enchanting *fêtes* were given at Mousseau, a villa belonging to the Duke of Orleans near Paris, at which Mrs. Robinson invariably declined to appear. Brilliant races *à l' Angloise* were exhibited on the plains *des Sablons*, to captivate the attention of the inexorable *Angloise*. On the birth-day of Mrs. Robinson, a new effort was made to subdue her aversion and to obtain her regard. A rural *fête* was appointed in the gardens of Mousseau, when this beautiful *Pandæmonium* of splendid profligacy was, at an unusual expence, decorated with boundless luxury.

In the evening, amidst a magnificent illumination, every tree displayed

the initials of *la belle Angloise*, composed of coloured lamps, interwoven with wreaths of artificial flowers. Politeness compelled Mrs. Robinson to grace with her presence a *fête* instituted to her honour. She, however, took the precaution of selecting for her companion a German lady, then resident at Paris, while the venerable Chevalier Lambert attended them as a *chaperon*.

Some days after the celebration of this festival, the Queen of France signified her intention of dining in public, for the first time after her *accouchement*, with the Duke of Normandy, afterwards Dauphin. The Duke brought to Mrs. Robinson a message from the Queen, expressing a wish that *la belle Angloise* might be induced to appear at the *grand couvert*. Mrs. Robinson, not less solicitous to

behold the lovely Marie Antoinette, gladly availed herself of the intimation, and immediately began to prepare for the important occasion. The most tasteful ornaments of Mademoiselle Bertin, the reigning milliner, were procured to adorn a form that, rich in native beauty, needed little embellishment. A pale green lustring train and body, with a tiffany petticoat festooned with bunches of the most delicate lilac, were chosen by Mrs. Robinson for her appearance, while a plume of white feathers adorned her head: the native roses of her cheeks, glowing with health and youth, were stained, in conformity to the fashion of the French court, with the deepest *rouge*.

On the arrival of the fair foreigner, the Duke d'Orleans quitted the *King*,

on whom he was then in waiting, to procure her a place, where the Queen might have an opportunity of observing those charms, by the fame of which her curiosity had been awakened.

The *grand couvert*, at which the King acquitted himself with more alacrity than grace, afforded a magnificent display of epicurean luxury. The Queen ate nothing. The slender crimson cord, which drew a line of separation between the royal epicures and the gazing plebeians, was at the distance but of a few feet from the table. A small space divided the Queen from Mrs. Robinson, whom the constant observation and loudly whispered encomiums of her Majesty most oppressively flattered. She appeared to survey, with peculiar attention, a miniature of the

Prince of Wales, which Mrs. Robinson wore on her bosom, and of which, on the ensuing day, she commissioned the Duke of Orleans to request the loan. Perceiving Mrs. Robinson gaze with admiration on her white and polished arms, as she drew on her gloves, the Queen again uncovered them, and leaned for a few moments on her hand. The Duke, on returning the picture, gave to the fair owner a purse, netted by the hand of Antoinette, and which she had commissioned him to present, from her to *la belle Angloise.* Mrs. Robinson not long after these events quitted Paris, and returned to her native country.

In 1784, her fate assumed a darker hue: she was attacked by a malady, to which she had nearly fallen a victim. An imprudent ex-

posure to the night air in travelling, when, exhausted by fatigue and mental anxiety, she slept in a chaise with the windows open, brought on a fever, which confined her to her bed during six months. The disorder terminated, at the conclusion of that period, *in a violent rheumatism, which progressively deprived her of the use of her limbs.* Thus, at four and twenty years of age, in the pride of youth and the bloom of beauty, was this lovely and unfortunate woman reduced to a state of more than infantine helplessness. Yet, even under so severe a calamity, the powers of her mind, and the elasticity of her spirits, triumphed over the weakness of her frame. This check to the pleasures and vivacity of youth, by depriving her of external resource, led her to the more assiduous culti-

vation and developement of her talents. But the resignation with which she had submitted, to one of the severest of human calamities, gave place to hope, on the assurance of her physician that by the mild air of a more southern climate she might probably be restored to health and activity.

The favourite wish of her heart, that of beholding her relations, from whom she had been so many years divided, was now in her power to gratify. From her elder brother she had frequently received invitations, the most pressing and affectionate, to quit for ever a country where an unprotected woman rarely fails to become the victim of calumny and persecution; and to take shelter in the bosom of domestic tranquillity, where peace, to which she had long been a stranger, might still await her. Delighted with the

idea of combining with the object of her travels an acquisition so desirable, and after which her exhausted heart panted, she eagerly embraced the proposal, and set out to Paris, with the resolution of proceeding to Leghorn. But a letter, on her arrival, from her physician, prescribing the warm baths of Aix la Chapelle in Germany, as a certain restorative for her complaints, frustrated her plans. Once more she proceeded in melancholy pursuit of that blessing which she was destined never more to obtain.

During her sojourn at Aix la Chapelle, a dawn of comparative tranquillity soothed her spirits. Secure from the machinations of her enemies, she determined, though happiness seemed no more within her reach, to endeavour to be contented. The assiduities and attentions shown her by all ranks

of people presented a striking medium between the volatility and libertine homage offered to her at Paris, and the persevering malignity which had followed her in her native land. Her beauty, the affecting state of her health, the attraction of her manners, and the powers of her mind, interested every heart in her favour; while the meekness with which she submitted to her fate excited an admiration not less fervent, and more genuine, than her charms, in the full blaze of their power, had ever extorted.

Among the many illustrious and enlightened persons, then resident at Aix la Chapelle, who honoured Mrs. Robinson by their friendship, she received from the late amiable and unfortunate Duke and Duchess du Chatelet, peculiar marks of distinction.

The Duke had, while ambassador in England, been the friend and associate of the learned Lord Mansfield: his Duchess, the *Elève* of Voltaire, claimed as her god-mother Gabrielle Emilia, Baroness du Chatelet, so celebrated by that lively and admirable writer. This inestimable family, consisting of the Duke and Duchess, their nephews the Counts de Damas, and a niece married to the Duke de Simianne, were indefatigable in their efforts to solace the affliction and amuse the mind of their fair friend. Balls, concerts, rural breakfasts, succeeded to each other in gay and attractive variety: the happy effects produced, on the health and spirits of Mrs Robinson, were considered by this French family as an ample compensation for their solici-

tude. When compelled by severer paroxysms of her malady to seclude herself from their society, a thousand kind stratagems were planned and executed to relieve her sufferings, or soften the dejection to which they unavoidably gave rise. Sometimes, on entering her dark and melancholy bath, the gloom of which was increased by high grated windows, she beheld the surface of the water covered with rose-leaves, while the vapour baths were impregnated with aromatic odours. The younger part of the family, when pain deprived Mrs. Robinson of rest, frequently passed the night beneath her windows, charming her sufferings and beguiling her of her sorrows, by singing her favourite airs to the accompaniment of the mandolin.

Thus, in despite of sickness, glided away two agreeable winters, when the transient gleam of brightness became suddenly obscured, and her prospects involved in deeper shade.

About this period Mrs. Robinson had the misfortune to lose her brave and respected father, a blow as forcible as unexpected, which nearly shook her faculties, and, for a time, wholly overwhelmed her spirits. Captain Darby, had, on the failure of his fortunes, been presented to the command of a small ordnance vessel, through the interest of some of his noble associates in the Indian expedition. Not having been regularly bred to the sea, this was the only naval appointment which he could receive. Enthusiastically attached to his profession,

he omitted no occasion of signalizing himself. The siege of Gibraltar, in the year 1783, afforded him an opportunity after which he had long panted, when his small vessel and gallant crew extorted, by their courage and exertions, the admiration and applause of the fleet. Having fought till his rigging was nearly destroyed, he turned his attention to the sinking Spaniards, whom he sought to snatch from the flaming wrecks, floating around him in all directions, and had the satisfaction to preserve, though at the hazard of his life, some hundreds of his fellow beings. The vessel of Captain Darby was the first that reached the rock by nearly an hour. On his landing, General Elliot received and embraced him with the plaudits due to his gallant conduct.

In the presence of his officers, the General lamented that so brave a man had not been bred to a profession, to which his interpidity would have done distinguished honour. To this eulogium he *added* that, with the courage of a lion, Captain Darby possessed the firmness of the rock which he had so bravely defended.

To his care was intrusted by the commander a *copy* of the dispatches, which Captain Darby delivered four-and-twenty hours *before the arrival* of the regular vessel. For this diligence, and the conduct which had preceded it, he received the THANKS of the Board of Admiralty, while on the other captain was bestowed the more substantial recompence of five hundred pounds. An injustice so glaring was not calculated to lessen Captain Dar-

by's distaste for England, which he quitted, after taking of his unhappy family an affectionate farewell.

At sixty-two years of age, he set out to regain in a foreign country the fortune he had sacrificed in the service of his own. With powerful recommendations from the Duke of Dorset and the Count de Simolin, he proceeded to Petersburg. From the Count de Simolin he continued to experience, till the latest period of his existence, a steady and zealous friendship. Captain Darby had been but two years in the Russian Imperial service when he was promoted to the command of a seventy-four gun ship, with promise of the appointment of admiral on the first vacancy. On the fifth day of December, 1785, death put a stop to his career. He was buried with military honours, and attended to the

grave by his friends Admiral Greig, the Counts Czernicheve and de Simolin, with the officers of the fleet*.

* The most affecting tribute, which the memory of a gallant father could receive, was the following pathetic and heart-felt effusion of genuine and grateful duty.

TO THE

MEMORY

OF

MY LAMENTED FATHER,

Who died in the service of the Empress of Russia, December 5, 1786.

" OH, SIRE, REVER'D! ADOR'D!
Was it the ruthless tongue of DEATH,
That whisp'ring to my pensive ear,
Pronounc'd the FATAL word!
That bath'd my cheek with many a tear,
And stopp'd, a while, my gasping breath?
'HE LIVES NO MORE!
Far on a foreign shore,
His honour'd dust a laurel'd grave receives
While his immortal soul in realms celestial
lives!'

This honourable testimony to her father's worth, was the only consolation remaining to his daughter, whose

"OH! MY LOV'D SIRE, FAREWELL!
Though we are doom'd on earth to meet no more,
Still mem'ry lives, and still I must adore!
And long this throbbing heart shall mourn,
Though thou, to these sad eyes, wilt ne'er return!
Yet shall remembrance dwell
On all thy sorrows through life's stormy sea,
When Fate's resistless whirlwinds shed
Unnumber'd tempests round thy head,
The varying ills of human destiny!
Yet, with a soul sublimely brave,
Didst thou endure the dashing wave;
Still buffeting the billows rude,
By all the shafts of woe, undaunted, unsubdued!
Through a long life of rugged care,
'Twas THINE to steer a steady course!
'Twas THINE Misfortune's frowns to bear,
And stem the wayward torrent's force!

enfeebled health and broken spirits sunk beneath these repeated strokes.

And as thy persevering mind
The toilsome path of FAME pursued,
'Twas THINE, amidst its FLOW'RS to find
The wily SNAKE—INGRATITUDE!
Yet vainly did th' insidious reptile strive
On THEE its poisons dire to fling;
Above its reach thy laurel still shall thrive,
Unconscious of the treach'rous sting!"

'Twas thine to toil through length'ning years,
Where low'ring night absorbs the spheres!
O'er icy seas to bend thy way,
Where frozen Greenland rears its head,
Where dusky vapours shroud the day,
And wastes of flaky snow, the stagnate Ocean spread!
'Twas thine, amidst the smoak of war,
To view, unmov'd, grim-fronted Death;
Where Fate, enthron'd in sulphur'd Car,
Shrunk the pale legions with her scorching breath!
While all around her bath'd in blood,
Iberia's haughty sons, plung'd lifeless, 'midst the flood!

During the four succeeding years of the life of Mrs. Robinson, but few

Now on the wings of Meditation borne,
Let fond Remembrance turn, *and turn to mourn;*
Slowly, and sad, her pinions sweep
O'er the rough bosom of the boist'rous deep,
To that disastrous fatal coast,
Where, on the foaming billows tost,
Imperial Catharine's navies rode;
And war's inviting banners wide,
Wav'd hostile o'er the glitt'ring tide,
That with exulting conquest glow'd!
For there, Oh Sorrow, check the tear!
There, round departed Valour's bier,
The sacred drops of kindred Virtue* shone!
Proud Monuments of Worth! whose base
Fame on her starry hill shall place;
There to endure, admir'd, sublime;
E'en when the mould'ring wing of Time
Shall scatter to the winds, huge pyramids of stone!

* Captain Darby commanded, at the time of his death, a ship of war in the Russian service, and was buried with military honours, universally lamented.

events occurred worthy of remark. In search of lost health, which she had

Oh! gallant Soul! Farewell!
Though doom'd this transient orb to leave,
Thy Daughter's heart, whose grief no words can tell,
Shall, in this throbbing centre, bid Thee live!
While from its crimson fount shall flow
The silent tear of ling'ring grief;
The gem sublime! that scorns relief,
Nor vaunting shines, with ostentatious woe!

Though thou art vanish'd from these eyes,
Still from thy sacred dust shall rise
A Wreath, that mocks the polish'd grace
Of sculptor'd bust, or tuneful praise;
While Fame shall weeping point the place
Where Valour's dauntless Son decays!
Unseen to cherish Mem'ry's source divine,
Oh! Parent of my Life, shall still be mine!

And thou shalt, from thy blissful state,
Awhile avert thy raptur'd gaze,
To own, that 'midst this wild'ring maze,
The Flame of filial Love defies the blast of Fate!

so long and vainly pursued, she determined to repair to the baths of St. Amand in Flanders, those receptacles of loathsome mud, and of reptiles, unknown to other soils, which fasten on the bodies of those who bathe. Mrs. Robinson made many visits to these distateful ditches before she could prevail on herself to enter them. Neither the example of her fellow sufferers, nor the assurance of cures performed by their wonderful efficacy, could for a long time overcome her disgust. At length, solicitude for the restoration of her health, added to the earnest remonstrances of her friends, determined her on making the effort. For the purpose of being near the baths, which must be entered an hour before the rising of the sun, she hired a small but beautiful cottage near the spring, where she passed the summer

of 1787. These peaceful vales and venerable woods were, at no distant period, destined to become the seat of war and devastation; and the very cottage in which Mrs. Robinson resided was converted into the head quarters of a republican French general.*

Every endeavour to subdue her disorder proving ineffectual, Mrs. Robinson relinquished her melancholy and fruitless pursuit, and resolved once more to return to her native land. Proceeding through Paris, she reached England in the beginning of 1788, from which period may be dated the commencement of her literary career. On her arrival in London, she was affectionately received by the few friends whose attachment neither detraction nor adverse fortunes could

* Dumourier.

weaken or estrange. During an absence of five years, death had made inroads in the little circle of her connections: many of those whose idea had been her solace in affliction, and whose welcome she had delighted to anticipate, were now, alas! no more.*

* An attachment took place between Mrs. ROBINSON and Colonel TARLETON, shortly after the return of the latter from America, which subsisted during sixteen years. On the circumstances which occasioned its dissolution, it is neither necessary, nor would it be proper to dwell. The exertions of Mrs. Robinson in the service of Col. Tarleton, when pressed by pecuniary embarrassment, led to that unfortunate journey, the consequences of which proved so fatal to her health. The Colonel accompanied her to the Continent; and, by his affectionate attentions, sought to alleviate those sufferings of which he had been the involuntary occasion.

Once more established in London, and surrounded by social and rational friends, Mrs. Robinson began to experience comparative tranquillity. The Prince of Wales, with his brother, the Duke of York, frequently honoured her residence with their presence: but the state of her health, which required more repose, added to the indiposition of her daughter, who was threatened by a consumptive disorder, obliged her to withdraw to a situation of greater retirement. Maternal solicitude for a beloved and only child now wholly engaged her attention: her assiduities were incessant and exemplary, for the restoration of a being to whom she had given life, and to whom she was fondly devoted.

In the course of the summer, she

was ordered by her physician to Brighthelmstone, for the benefit of sea bathing. During hours of tedious watching over the health of her suffering child, Mrs. Robinson beguiled her anxiety by contemplating the ocean, whose successive waves, breaking upon the shore, beat against the wall of their little garden. To a mind naturally susceptible, and tinctured by circumstances with sadness, this occupation afforded a melancholy pleasure, which could scarcely be relinquished without regret. Whole nights were passed by Mrs. Robinson at her window in deep meditation, contrasting with her present situation the scenes of her former life.

Every device, which a kind and skilful nurse could invent to cheer and amuse her charge, was practised

by this affectionate mother, during the melancholy period of her daughter's confinement. In the intervals of more active exertion, the silence of a sick chamber proving favourable to the muse, Mrs. Robinson poured forth those poetic effusions which have done so much honour to her genius, and decked her tomb with unfading laurels. Conversing one evening with Mr. Richard Burke,* respecting the facility with which modern poetry was composed, Mrs. Robinson repeated nearly the whole of those beautiful lines, which were afterwards given to the public, addressed—"*To him who will understand them.*"

* Son of the celebrated Edmund Burke.

LINES

TO HIM WHO WILL UNDERSTAND THEM.

THOU art no more my bosom's Friend;
Here must the sweet delusion end,
That charm'd my senses many a year,
Thro' smiling summers, winters drear.—
O, Friendship! am I doomed to find
Thou art a phantom of the mind?
A glitt'ring shade, an empty name,
An air-born vision's vap'rish flame?
And yet, the dear deceit so long
Has wak'd to joy my matin song,
Has bid my tears forget to flow,
Chas'd ev'ry pain, sooth'd ev'ry woe,
That Truth, unwelcome to my ear,
Swells the deep sigh, recalls the tear,
Gives to the sense the keenest smart,
Checks the warm pulses of the Heart,
Darkens my Fate, and steals away
Each gleam of joy thro' life's sad day.

Britain, farewell! I quit thy shore:
My native Country charms no more:
No guide to mark the toilsome road,
No destin'd clime, no fix'd abode,
Alone and sad ordain'd to trace
The vast expanse of endless space;
To view, upon the mountain's height,
Thro' varied shades of glimm'ring light,
The distant landscape fade away
In the last gleam of parting day:—
Or, on the quiv'ring lucid stream,
To watch the pale moon's silv'ry beam;
Or when, in sad and plaintive strains,
The mournful Philomel complains,
In dulcet note bewails her fate,
And murmurs for her absent mate;
Inspir'd by Sympathy divine,
I'll weep her woes—for they are mine.
Driven by my Fate, where'er I go,
O'er burning plains, o'er hills of snow;
Or, on the bosom of the wave,
The howling tempest doom'd to brave,—
Where'er my lonely course I bend,
Thy image shall my steps attend;
Each object, I am doom'd to see,
Shall bid remembrance picture Thee.

Yes; I shall view thee in each flow'r,
That changes with the transient hour:
Thy wand'ring Fancy I shall find
Borne on the wings of every wind:
Thy wild impetuous Passions trace
O'er the white waves' tempestuous space:
In every changing season prove
An emblem of thy wav'ring Love.

Torn from my country, friends, and you,
The World lies open to my view:
New objects shall my mind engage;
I will explore th' historic page;
Sweet Poetry shall soothe my soul;
Philoshphy each pang controul:
The Muse I'll seek—her lambent fire
My soul's quick senses shall inspire;
With finer nerves my heart shall beat,
Touch'd by Heaven's own Promethean heat;
Italia's gales shall bear my song
In soft-link'd notes her woods among;
Upon the blue hill's misty side,
Thro' trackless deserts waste and wide,
O'er craggy rocks, whose torrents flow
Upon the silver sands below.

Sweet Land of Melody! 'tis thine
The softest passions to refine;
Thy myrtle groves, thy melting strains,
Shall harmonize and soothe my pains.
Nor will I cast one thought behind,
On Foes relentless, Friends unkind:
I feel, I feel their poison'd dart
Pierce the life-nerve within my heart:
'Tis mingled with the vital heat
That bids my throbbing pulses beat:
Soon shall that vital heat be o'er;
Those throbbing pulses beat no more!
No—I will breathe the spicy gale;
Plunge the clear stream, new health inhale;
O'er my pale cheek diffuse the rose,
And drink Oblivion to my woes.

This *improvisatore* produced in her auditor not less surprise than admiration, when solemnly assured by its author that this was the first time of its being repeated. Mr. Burke entreated her to commit the poem to writing, a request which was readily complied

with. Mrs. Robinson had afterwards the gratification of finding this offspring of her genius inserted in The Annual Register, with a flattering encomium from the pen of the eloquent and ingenious editor.*

Mrs. Robinson continued to indulge in this solace for her dejected spirits; and, in sonnets, elegies, and odes, displayed the powers and versatility of her mind. On one of these nights of melancholy inspiration, she discovered from her window a small boat struggling in the spray, which dashed against the wall of her garden. Presently two fishermen brought on shore in their arms a burthen which, notwithstanding

* The Right Honourable Edmund Burke, at that time conductor of The Annual Register.

the distance, Mrs Robinson perceived to be a human body; which the fishermen, after covering it with a sail from their boat, left on the land and disappeared. But a short time elapsed before the men returned, bringing with them fuel, with which they vainly endeavoured to re-animate their unfortunate charge. Struck with a circumstance so affecting, which the stillness of the night rendered yet more impressive, Mrs. Robinson remained for some time at her window motionless with horror. At length, recovering her recollection, she alarmed the family; but, before they could gain the beach, the men had again departed. The morning dawned, and day broke in upon the tragical scene. The bathers passed and repassed with little concern, while the corpse con-

tinued, extended on the shore, not twenty yards from the STEINE. During the course of the day, many persons came to look on the body, which still remained unclaimed and unknown. Another day wore away, and the corpse was unburied; the Lord of the Manor having refused to a fellow-being a grave in which his bones might decently repose, alleging as an excuse *that he did not belong to that parish.* Mrs. Robinson, humanely indignant at the scene which passed, exerted herself, but without success, to procure by subscription a small sum for performing the last duties to a wretched outcast. Unwilling, by an ostentatious display of her name, to offend the higher and more fastidious female powers, she presented to the fishermen her own

contribution, and declined further to interfere. The affair dropped; and the body of the stranger, being dragged to the cliff, was covered by a heap of stones, without the tribute of a sigh, or the ceremony of a prayer.

These circumstances made on the mind of Mrs. Robinson a deep and lasting impression; even at a distant period she could not repeat them without horror and indignation. This incident gave rise to the poem, entitled "*The Haunted Beach*," written but a few months before her death.

In the winter of 1790, Mrs. Robinson entered into a poetical correspondence with Mr. Robert Merry, under the fictitious names of "Laura," and "Laura Maria;" Mr.

Merry assuming the title of "Della Crusca*."

Mrs. Robinson now proceeded in her literary career with redoubled ardour; but, dazzled by the false metaphors and rhapsodical extravagance of some contemporary writers, she suffered her judgment to be misled and her taste to be perverted; an error of which she became afterwards sensible. During her poetical disguise, many complimentary poems were addressed to her: several ladies of the *Blue Stocking* club, while Mrs. Robinson remained unknown, even ventured to admire, nay, more, to recite her productions, in their learned and critical *coterie*.

The attention which this novel species of correspondence excited,

* Mr. Merry had been a Member of the "*Scuola* della Crusca," at Florence.

and the encomiums which were passed on her poems, could not fail to gratify the pride of the writer: who sent her next performance, with her own signature, to the paper published under the title of "The World," avowing herself at the same time the author of the lines signed "Laura," and "Laura Maria." This information being received by Mr. Bell, though a professed admirer of the genius of Mrs. Robinson, with some degree of scepticism, he replied "That the poem with which Mrs. Robinson had honoured him was *vastly pretty*; but that he was well acquainted with the author of the productions alluded to." Mrs. Robinson, a little disgusted at this incredulity, immediately sent for Mr. Bell; whom she found means to convince of her veracity, and of his own injustice.

In 1791, Mrs. Robinson produced her quarto poem, entitled "Ainsi va le Monde." This work, containing three hundred and fifty lines, was written in twelve hours, as a reply to Mr. Merry's "Laurel of Liberty," which was sent to Mrs. Robinson on a Saturday: on the *Tuesday following*: the answer was *composed and given to the public*.

Encouraged by popular approbation beyond her most sanguine hopes, Mrs. Robinson now published her first essay in prose; the Romance of VANCENZA; of which the whole edition was *sold in one day*, and of which five impressions have since followed. It must be confessed this production owed its popularity to the celebrity of the author's name, and the favourable impression of her talents given to the

public by her poetical compositions, rather than to its intrinsic merit. In the same year, the poems of Mrs. Robinson were collected and published in one volume. The names of nearly six hundred subscribers, of the most distinguished rank and talents, graced the list which precedes the work.

The mind of Mrs. Robinson, beguiled by these pursuits from preying upon itself, became gradually reconciled to the calamitous state of her health: the mournful certainty of total and incurable lameness, while yet in the bloom and summer of life, was alleviated by the consciousness of intellectual resource, and by the activity of a fertile fancy. In 1791, she passed the greater part of the summer at Bath, occupied in lighter poetical

compositions. But even from this relief she was now for a while debarred: the perpetual exercise of the imagination and intellect, added to an uniform and sedentary life, affected the system of her nerves, and contributed to debilitate her frame. She was prohibited by her physician, not merely from committing her thoughts to paper, but, had it been possible, from thinking at all: no truant, escaped from school, could receive more pleasure, in eluding a severe master, than did Mrs. Robinson, when, the vigilance of her physician relaxing, she could once more resume her books and her pen.

As an example of the facility and rapidity with which she composed, the following anecdote may be given. Returning one evening from the bath,

she beheld a few paces before her chair an elderly man, hurried along by a crowd of people, by whom he was pelted with mud and stones. His meek and unresisting deportment exciting her attention: she inquired what were his offences, and learned, with pity and surprise, that he was an unfortunate maniac, known only by the appellation of "*mad Jemmy.*" The situation of this miserable being seized her imagination, and became the subject of her attention: she would wait whole hours for the appearance of the poor maniac; and, whatever were her occupations, the voice of *mad Jemmy* was sure to allure her to the window. She would gaze upon his venerable but emaciated countenance with sensations of awe almost reverential, while the barbarous persecutions

of the thoughtless crowd never failed to agonize her feelings.

One night, after bathing, having suffered from her disorder more than usual pain, she swallowed, by order of her physician, nearly eighty drops of laudanum. Having slept for some hours, she awoke, and, calling her daughter, desired her to take a pen and write what she should dictate. Miss Robinson, supposing that a request so unusual might proceed from the delirium excited by the opium, endeavoured in vain to dissuade her mother from her purpose. The spirit of inspiration was not to be subdued, and she repeated, throughout, the admirable poem of The Maniac*, much faster than it could be committed to paper.

* Mrs. Robinson's Poems, vol. ii. p. 27.

She lay, while dictating, with her eyes closed, apparently in the stupor which opium frequently produces, repeating like a person talking in her sleep. This affecting performance, produced under circumstances so singular, does no less credit to the genius than to the heart of the author.

On the ensuing morning Mrs. Robinson had only a confused idea of what had past; nor could be convinced of the fact till the manuscript was produced. She declared that she had been dreaming of mad Jemmy throughout the night, but was perfectly unconscious of having been awake while she composed the poem, or of the circumstances narrated by her daughter.

Mrs. Robinson, in the following Summer, determined on another con-

tinental tour, purposing to remain some time at Spa. She longed once more to experience the friendly greeting, and liberal kindness, which even her acknowledged talents had in her native country failed to procure. She quitted London in July 1792, accompanied by her mother and daughter. The susceptible and energetic mind, fortunately for its possessor, is endowed with an elastic power, that enables it to rise again from the benumbing effects of those adverse strokes of fortune, to which it is but too vulnerable. If a lively imagination adds poignancy to disappointment, it also has in itself resources unknown to more equal temperaments. In the midst of the depressing feelings which Mrs. Robinson experienced, in once more becoming

a wanderer from her home, she courted the inspiration of the muse; and soothed, by the following beautiful stanzas, the melancholy sensations that oppressed her heart.

STANZAS,

Written between Dover and Calais, July 20, 1792.

Bounding billow, cease thy motion;
 Bear me not so swiftly o'er;
Cease thy roaring, foamy ocean;
 I will tempt thy rage no more.

Ah! within my bosom beating,
 Varying passions wildly reign;
Love, with proud *resentment* meeting,
 Throbs by turns of *joy* and *pain*.

Joy, that far from foes I wander,
 Where their taunts can reach no more;
Pain, that woman's heart grows fonder,
 When her dream of bliss is o'er!

Love, by fickle fancy banish'd,
Spurn'd by hope, indignant flies:
Yet, when love and hope are vanish'd,
Restless mem'ry never dies.

Far I go, where fate shall lead me;
Far, across the troubl'd deep:
Where no stranger's ear shall heed me,
Where no eye for me shall weep.

Proud has been my fatal passion!
Proud my injur'd heart shall be!
While each thought, each inclination,
Still shall prove me worthy *thee!*

Not one sigh shall tell my story;
Not one tear my cheek shall stain;
Silent grief shall be my glory—
Grief, *that stoops not to complain!*

Let the bosom, prone to ranging,
Still by ranging seek a cure;
Mine disdains the thought of changing,
Proudly destin'd to *endure.*

Yet, ere far from all I treasur'd,
 ******** ere I bid adieu;
Ere my days of pain are measur'd,
 Take the song that's *still* thy due!

Yet, believe, no servile passions
 Seek to charm thy vagrant mind;
Well I know thy inclinations,
 Wav'ring as the passing wind.

I have lov'd thee,—*dearly* lov'd thee,
 Through an age of worldly woe;
How ungrateful I have prov'd thee
 Let my mournful exile show!

Ten long years of anxious sorrow,
 Hour by hour, I counted o'er;
Looking forward, till to-morrow,
 Every day I lov'd thee more!

Pow'r and splendour could not charm me;
 I no joy in wealth could see;
Nor could threats or fears alarm me,
 Save the fear of *losing thee!*

When the storms of fortune press'd thee,
  I have wept to see *thee* weep!
When relentless cares distress'd thee,
  I have lull'd those cares to sleep!

When with *thee* what ills could harm me?
  Thou could'st every pang assuage;
But, when *absent,* nought could charm me;
  Every *moment* seem'd an *age.*

Fare thee well, ungrateful rover!
  Welcome *Gallia's* hostile shore:
Now the breezes waft me over;
  Now we part—TO MEET NO MORE.

On landing at Calais, Mrs. Robinson hesitated whether to proceed. To travel through Flanders, then the seat of war, threatened too many perils to be attempted with impunity: she determined, therefore, for some time, to remain at Calais; the insipid and spirit-

less amusements of which presented little either to divert her attention or engage her mind. Her time passed in listening to the complaints of the impoverished aristocrats, or in attending to the air-built projects of their triumphant adversaries. The arrival of travellers from England, or the return of those from Paris, alone diversified the scene, and afforded a resource to the curious and active inquirer.

The sudden arrival of her husband gave a turn to the feelings of Mrs. Robinson: he had crossed the channel for the purpose of carrying back to England his daughter, whom he wished to present to a brother newly returned from the East Indies. Maternal conflicts shook on this occasion the mind of Mrs. Robinson, which he-

sitated between a concern for the interest of her beloved child, from whom she had never been separated, and the pain of parting from her. She resolved at length on accompanying her to England; and, with this view, quitted Calais on the memorable second of September, 1792, a day which will reflect on the annals of the republic an indelible stain.

They had sailed but a few hours when the *arrêt* arrived, by which every British subject throughout France was restrained.

Mrs. Robinson rejoiced in her escape, and anticipated with delight the idea of seeing her daughter placed in wealthy protection, the great passport in her own country to honour and esteem. Miss Robinson received from her new relation the promise of protection and favour, upon condition

that she renounced for ever the *filial tie* which united her to *both* parents. This proposal was *rejected*, by the young lady, with proper principle and becoming spirit.

In the year 1793, a little farce, entitled *Nobody*, was written by Mrs. Robinson. This piece, designed as a satire on *female gamesters*, was received at the theatre, the characters distributed, and preparations made for its exhibition. At this period, one of the principal performers gave up her part; alleging that the piece was intended as a ridicule on her particular friend. Another actress also, though in "herself an host," was intimidated by a letter, informing her that "Nobody should be damned!" The author received likewise, on the same day, a scurrilous, indecent, and *ill-disguised* scrawl, signifying to her that the farce

was already condemned. On the drawing up of the curtain, several persons in the galleries, whose *liveries* betrayed their *employers*, were heard to declare that they were sent to *do up* Nobody. Even women of distinguished rank hissed through their fans. Notwithstanding these manœuvres and exertions, the more rational part of the audience seemed inclined to hear before they passed judgment; and, with a firmness that never fails to awe, demanded that the piece should proceed. The first act was accordingly suffered without interruption: a song in the second being unfortunately encored, the malcontents once more ventured to raise their voices, and the malignity that had been forcibly suppressed burst forth with redoubled violence. For three nights, the theatre presented a scene of confusion; when the

authoress, after experiencing the gratification of a zealous and sturdy defence, thought proper wholly to withdraw the cause of contention.

Mrs. Robinson, in the course of this year, lost her only remaining parent, whom she tenderly loved and sincerely lamented. Mrs. Darby expired in the house of her daughter, who, though by far the *least wealthy* of her children, had proved herself through life the most *attentive* and *affectionate*. From the first hour of Mr. Darby's failure and estrangement from his family, Mrs. Robinson had been the protector and the support of her mother: even when pressed herself by pecuniary embarrassment, it had been her pride and pleasure to shelter her widowed parent, and preserve her from inconvenience.

Mrs. Darby had two sons, mer-

chants, wealthy and respected in the commercial world; but to these gentlemen Mrs. Robinson would never suffer her mother to apply for any assistance, that was not voluntarily offered. The filial sorrow of Mrs. Robinson, on her loss for many months affected her health; even to the latest hour of her life her grief appeared renewed, when any object presented itself connected with the memory of her departed mother.

Few events of importance occurred during the five following years; excepting that, through this period, the friends of Mrs. Robinson observed with concern the gradual ravages which indisposition and mental anxiety were daily making upon her frame. An ingenuous, affectionate, susceptible heart is seldom favourable to the happiness of the possessor.—It was

the fate of Mrs. Robinson to be deceived where she most confided; to experience treachery and intragitude where she had a title to kindness and a claim to support. Frank and unsuspicious, she suffered her conduct to be guided by the impulse of her feelings; and, by a too credulous reliance on the apparent attachment of those whom she loved, and in whom she delighted to trust, she laid herself open to the impositions of the selfish, and the stratagems of the crafty.

In 1799, her increasing involvements and declining health pressed heavily upon her mind: she had voluntarily relinquished those comforts and elegancies to which she had been accustomed: she had retrenched even her necessary expences, and nearly secluded herself from society. Her physician had declared that by exercise

only could her existence be prolonged; yet the narrowness of her circumstances obliged her to forego the only means by which it could be obtained. Thus, a prisoner in her own house, she was deprived of every solace but that which could be obtained by the activity of her mind, which at length sunk under excessive exertion and inquietude.

Indisposition had for nearly five weeks confined her to her bed, when, after a night of extreme suffering and peril, through which her physician hourly expected her dissolution, she had sunk into a gentle and balmy sleep. At this instant, her chamber door was forcibly pushed open, with a noise that shook her enfeebled frame nearly to annihilation, by two strange and ruffian-looking men, who entered with barbarous abruptness. On her

faintly inquiring the occasion of this outrage, she was informed that one of her unwelcome visitors was an attorney and the other his client, who had thus, with as little decency as humanity, forced themselves into the chamber of an almost expiring woman. The motive of this intrusion was to demand her appearance, as a witness, in *a suit pending against her brother*, in which these men were parties concerned. No intreaties could prevail on them to quit the chamber, where they both remained, questioning, in a manner the most unfeeling and insulting, the unfortunate victim of their audacity and persecution. One of them, the client, with a barbarous and unmanly sneer, turning to his confederate, asked—'Who, to see the lady they were now speaking to, could believe that she had once been called the

beautiful Mrs. Robinson?' To this he added other observations not less savage and brutal; and, after throwing on the bed *a subpœna*, quitted the apartment. The wretch who could thus, by insulting the sick and violating every law of humanity and common decency, disgrace the figure of a man, was a *professor* and a *priest* of that religion which enjoins us—'not to break the bruised reed,' *and to bind up the broken in heart!* His *name* shall be suppressed, through respect to *the order* of which he is an unworthy *member*. The consequences of this brutality upon the poor invalid were violent convulsions, which had nearly extinguished the struggling spark of life.

By slow degrees, her malady yielded to the cares and skill of her medical attendants, and she was once more restored to temporary convalescence:

but from that time her strength gradually decayed. Though her frame was shaken to its centre, her circumstances compelled her still to exert the faculties of her mind. The sportive exercises of fancy were now converted into toilsome labours of the brain; and nights of sleepless anxiety were succeeded by days of vexation and dread.

About this period she was induced to undertake the poetical department, for the editor of a morning paper*; and actually commenced a series of Satirical Odes, on local and temporary subjects, to which was affixed the signature of 'Tab[illegible]ha Bramble.' Among these lighter compositions, considered by the author as unworthy of a place with her collected poems, a more matured production of her genius was occa-

* The Morning Post.

sionally introduced; of which the following *Ode to Spring*, written April 30, 1780, is a beautiful and affecting example:

LIFE-glowing season! odour-breathing SPRING!
Deck'd in cerulean splendours; vivid,—warm,
Shedding soft lustre on the rosy hours,
And calling forth their beauties! BALMY SPRING!
To thee the vegetating world begins
To pay fresh homage. Ev'ry southern gale
Whispers thy coming; every tepid show'r
Revivifies thy charms. The mountain breeze
Wafts the ethereal essence to the vale,
While the low vale returns its fragrant hoard
With tenfold sweetness. When the dawn unfolds
Its purple splendours 'mid the dappl'd clouds,
Thy influence cheers the soul. When noon uplifts
Its burning canopy, spreading the plain
Of Heav'n's own radience with one vast of light,
Thou smil'st triumphant! Ev'ry little flow'r
Seems to exult in thee, delicious SPRING,
Luxuriant Nurse of Nature! By the stream,

That winds its swift course down the mountain's side,
Thy progeny are seen;—young primroses,
And all the varying buds of wildest birth,
Dotting the green slope gaily. On the thorn,
Which arms the hedge-row, the young birds invite
With merry minstrelsy, shrilly and maz'd
With winding cadences: now quick, now sunk
In the low twitter'd song. The ev'ning sky
Reddens the distant main; catching the sail,
Which slowly lessens, and with crimson hue
Varying the see-green wave; while the young Moon,
Scarce visible among the warmer tints
Of western splendours, slowly lifts her brow
Modest and icy-lustred! O'er the plain
The light dews rise, sprinkling the thistle's head,
And hanging its clear drops on the wild waste
Of broomy fragrance. Season of delight!—
Thou soul expanding pow'r, whose wond'rous glow
Can bid all NATURE smile!—Ah! why to ME
Come unregarded, undelighting still—
This ever-mourning bosom? So I've seen
The sweetest flow'rets bind the icy urn;

The brightest sun-beams glitter on the grave;
And the soft zephyr kiss the troublous main
With whisper'd murmurs. Yes, to ME, O
SPRING!
Thou com'st unwelcom'd by a smile of joy;
To ME! slow with'ring to that silent grave
Where all is blank and dreary! Yet once more
The SPRING-ETERNAL of the SOUL shall dawn,
Unvisited by clouds, by storms, by change,
Radiant and unexhausted! Then, ye buds,
Ye plumy minstrels, and ye balmy gales,
Adorn your little hour, and give your joys
To bless the fond world-loving traveller,
Who smiling measures the long flow'ry path
That leads to DEATH! For to such wanderers
Life is a busy, pleasing, cheerful dream,
And the last hour unwelcome. Not to ME,
O! not to me, stern DEATH, art thou a foe;
Thou art the welcome messenger, which brings
A *passport* to a BLEST and LONG REPOSE.

A just value was at that time set upon the exertions of Mrs. Robinson by the conductors of the paper, who "considered them as one of the prin-

cipal embellishments and supports of their journal."

In the spring of 1800, she was compelled, by the daily encroachments of her malady, wholly to relinquish her literary employments.

Her disorder was pronounced by the physicians to be a rapid decline. Dr. Henry Vaughan, who to medical skill unites the most exalted philanthrophy, prescribed, as a last resource, a journey to Bristol Wells. A desire once again to behold her native scenes induced Mrs. Robinson eagerly to accede to this proposal. She wept with melancholy pleasure at the idea of closing her eyes for ever, upon a world of vanity and disappointment, in the place in which she had first drawn breath, and terminating her sorrows on the spot which gave

her birth: but even this sad solace was denied to her, from a want of the pecuniary means for its execution. In vain she applied to those on whom honour, humanity, and justice, gave her undoubted claims. She even condescended to entreat, as a *donation*, the return of those sums granted as *a loan* in her prosperity.

The following is a copy of a letter addressed, on this occasion, to a *noble* debtor, and found among the papers of Mrs. Robinson after her decease.

To ******.

MY LORD, April 23, 1800.

"PRONOUNCED by my physicians to be in a rapid decline, I trust that your lordship will have the goodness to assist me with a part of the sum for

which you are indebted to me. Without your aid I cannot make trial of the Bristol waters, the *only* remedy that presents to me any hope of preserving my existence. I should be sorry to *die* at enmity with any person; and you may be assured, my dear lord, that I bear none towards you. It would be useless to ask you to call on me; but, if you would do me that honour, I should be happy, *very happy*, to see you, being,

"My dear Lord,

"Yours truly,

"MARY ROBINSON."

To this letter no answer was returned!! Further comments are unnecessary.

The last literary performance of Mrs. Robinson was a volume of

Lyrical Tales. She repaired, a short time after, to a small cottage *ornée*, belonging to her daughter, near Windsor. Rural occupation and amusement, quiet and pure air, appeared for a time to cheer her spirits, and renovate her shattered frame. Once more her active mind returned to its accustomed and favorite pursuits; but the toil of supplying the constant variety required by a daily print, added to other engagements, which she almost despaired of being capacitated to fulfil, pressed heavily upon her spirits, and weighed down her enfeebled frame. Yet, in the month of August, she began and concluded, in the course of ten days, a translation of Dr. Hager's "Picture of Palermo;" an exertion by which she was greatly debilitated. She was compelled, though with reluctance,

to relinquish the translation of "The Messiah of Klopstock," which she had purposed giving to the English reader in blank verse; a task particularly suited to her genius and the turn of her mind.

But, amidst the pressure of complicated distress, the mind of this unfortunate woman was superior to improper concessions, and treated with just indignation those offers of service which required the sacrifice of her integrity.

She yet continued, though with difficulty, and many intervals, her literary avocations. When necessitated by pain and languor to limit her exertions, her unfeeling employers accused her of negligence. This inconsideration, though she seldom complained, affected her spirits, and preyed upon her heart. As she hourly declined

towards that asylum where *the weary rest*, her mind seemed to acquire strength in proportion to the weakness of her frame. When no longer able to support the fatigue of being removed from her chamber, she retained a perfect composure of spirits; and, in the intervals of extreme bodily suffering, would listen, while her daughter read to her, with apparent interest and collectedness of thought, frequently making observations on what would probably take place when she had passed that "*bourn*," whence no traveller returns. The flattering nature of her disorder at times inspired her friends with the most sanguine hopes of her restoration to health; she would even herself, at intervals, cherish the idea: but these gleams of hope, like flashes of lightning athwart the storm, were succeeded by a deeper gloom; and the

consciousness of her approaching fate returned upon the mind of the sufferer with increased conviction.

Within a few days of her decease, she collected and arranged her poetical works, which she bound her daughter, by a solemn adjuration, to publish for her subscribers, and also the present memoir. Requesting earnestly that the papers prepared for the latter purpose might be brought to her, she gave them into the hands of Miss Robinson, with an *injunction* that the narrative should be made public; adding, 'I should have continued it up to the present time,—but, perhaps, it is as well that I have been prevented. *Promise* me that you will print it!' The request of a dying parent, so made, and at such a moment, *could not be refused.* SHE IS OBEYED Upon the solemn assurances of her

daughter, that her last desire so strongly urged should be complied with, the mind of Mrs. Robinson became composed and tranquil: her intellect yet remained unimpaired, though her corporeal strength hourly decayed.

A short time previous to her death, during an interval of her daughter's absence from her chamber, she called an attending friend, whose benevolent heart and unremitting kindness will, it is hoped, meet hereafter with their reward, and entreated her to observe her last requests, adding, with melancholy tenderness, 'I cannot talk to my poor girl on these sad subjects.' Then, with an unruffled manner, and minute precision, she gave orders respecting her interment, which she desired might be performed with all possible simplicity. " Let me," said she, with an impressive though almost

inarticulate voice, " be buried in Old Windsor church-yard." For the selection of that spot she gave *a particular reason.* She also mentioned an undertaker, whose name she recollected having seen on his door, and whom she appointed from his vicinity to the probable place of her decease. A few trifling memorials, as tributes of her affection, were all the property she had to bequeath: she also earnestly desired that a part of her hair might be sent to two *particular persons.*

One evening, her anxious nurses, with a view to divert her mind, talked of some little plans to take place on her restoration to health. She shook her head with an affecting and significant motion. " Don't deceive yourselves," said she: " remember, *I tell you* I am but a very little time longer for this world." Then pressing to her

heart her daughter, who knelt by her bed-side, she held her head for some minutes clasped against her bosom, which throbbed, as with some internal and agonizing conflict.—"*Poor heart!*" murmured she, in a deep and stifled tone, "*what will become of thee?*" She paused some moments, and at length, struggling to assume more composure, desired, in a calmer voice, that some one would read to her. Throughout the remainder of the evening, she continued placidly and even cheerfully attentive to the person who read, observing that, *should* she recover, she designed to commence a long work, upon which she would bestow great pains and time. "Most of her writings," she added, "had been composed in too much haste."

Her disorder rapidly drawing towards a period, the accumulation of

water upon her chest every moment threatened suffocation. For nearly fifteen nights and days she was obliged to be supported upon pillows, or in the arms of her young and affectionate nurses *. Her decease, through this period, was hourly expected. On the twenty-first of December, she inquired how near was Christmas day? Being answered, Within a few days —"*Yet*," said she, "I shall never see it." The remainder of this melancholy day passed in undescribable tortures. Towards midnight, the sufferer exclaimed,—"Oh God, oh just and merciful God, help me to support this agony." The whole of the ensuing day she continued to endure great anguish. In the evening, a kind of lethargic stupor came on. Miss Robin-

* Miss Robinson and a friend.

son, approaching the pillow of her expiring mother, earnestly conjured her to speak if in her power. "*My darling Mary!*" she faintly articulated, and *ſpoke no more.* In another hour she became insensible to the grief of those by whom she was surrounded, and breathed her last at a quarter past twelve on the following noon.

The body was opened, at the express wish of Drs. Pope and Chandler. The immediate cause of her death appeared to have been *a dropsy in the chest*; but the sufferings which she endured, previous to her decease, were probably occasioned by six large gall-stones, found in the gall-bladder.

All her requests were strictly observed. Her remains were deposited, according to her direction, in the

church-yard of Old Windsor: the spot was marked out by the friend to whom she had signified her wishes. The funeral was attended only by two literary friends, greatly valued by the deceased, whose friendship and benevolence had cheered her while living, and followed her to the grave. A memorial to her genius, her beauty and her misfortunes, in a simple monument, on which is to be engraven an epitaph, composed for the occasion by a friend, is now preparing. To the epitaph it is proposed to add some lines, written by Mrs. Robinson for a work of fiction, but too applicable to her own destiny.——

EPITAPH

ON MRS. ROBINSON'S MONUMENT

In the Church of Old Windsor.

BY S. J. PRATT, ESQ.

OF Beauty's Isle, her daughters must declare,
She who sleeps here was fairest of the fair.
But ah! while Nature on her favourite smil'd,
And Genius claim'd his share in Beauty's child,
Ev'n as they wove a garland for her brow,
Sorrow prepar'd a willowy wreath of woe;
Mix'd lurid nightshade with the buds of May,
And twin'd her darkest cypress with the bay:
In mildew tears steep'd every opening flow'r:
Prey'd on the sweets, and gave the canker pow'r:
Yet, O may Pity's angel, from the grave
This early victim of misfortune save!
And, as she springs to everlasting morn,
May Glory's fadeless crown her soul adorn!

LINES

BY MRS. ROBINSON,

Now engraven on her Monument in Old Windsor Church-yard.

O Thou! whose cold and senseless heart
Ne'er knew affection's struggling sigh,
Pass on, nor vaunt the Stoic's art,
Nor mock this grave with tearless eye.

For oft, when evening's purple glow
Shall slowly fade from yonder steep,
Fast o'er this sod the tear shall flow
From eyes that only wake to weep.

No wealth had she, no power to sway;
Yet rich in worth, and learning's store:
She *wept her summer hours away*,
She heard the win'try storm no more.

Yet, o'er this low and silent spot,
Full many a bud of Spring shall wave;
While she, by all, save ONE, forgot,
SHALL SNATCH A WREATH BEYOND THE GRAVE!

Respecting the circumstances of the preceding narrative, every reader, as influenced by his preconceived habits and opinions, must be left to form his own reflections. To the humane mind, the errors of the unfortunate subject of this memoir will appear to have been more than expiated by her sufferings. Nor will the peculiar disadvantages, by which her introduction *into* life was attended, be forgotten by the candid—disadvantages that, by converting into a snare the bounties lavished on her by nature, proved not less fatal to her happiness than to her conduct. On her unhappy marriage, and its still more unhappy consequences, it is unnecessary to comment: thus circumstanced, her genius, her sensibility, and her beauty combined to her destruction; while, by her exposed situation, her inexpe-

rience of life, her tender youth, with the magnitude of the temptations which beset her, she could scarcely fail of being betrayed.

> "Say, ye severest——
> —— what would you have done?"

The malady which seized her in the bloom of youth, and pursued her, with unmitigable severity, through every stage of life, till, in the prime of her powers, it laid her in a premature grave, exhibits, in the history of its progress, a series of sufferings that might disarm the sternest, soften the most rigid, and awaken pity in the hardest heart. Her mental exertions through this depressing disease, the elasticity of her mind, and the perseverance of her efforts, amidst numberless sources of vexation and distress, cannot fail, while they awaken sym-

pathy, to extort admiration. Had this lovely plant, now withered and low in the dust, been, in its early growth, transplanted into a happier soil—sheltered from the keen blasts of adversity and the mildew of detraction, it might have extended its roots, unfolded its blossoms, diffused its sweetness, shed its perfumes, and still flourished, beauteous to the eye and grateful to the sense.

To represent the character of the individual in the circumstances of his life, his conduct under those circumstances, and the consequences which they ultimately produce, is the peculiar province of biography. Little therefore remains to be added. The benevolent temper, the filial piety, and the *maternal tenderness of Mrs. Robinson* are exemplified in the pre-

ceding pages; as her genius, her talents, the fertility of her imagination and the powers of her mind, are displayed in her productions, the popularity of which at least affords a presumption of their merit. Her manners were polished and conciliating, her powers of conversation rich and varied. The brilliancy of her wit and the sallies of her fancy were ever tempered by kindness, and chastened by delicacy. Though accustomed to the society of the great, and paying to rank the tribute which civil institutions have rendered its due, she reserved her esteem and deference for those only whose talents or whose merits claimed the homage of the mind.

With the unfortunate votaries of letters she sincerely sympathized; and, not unfrequently, has been known to

divide the profits of her genius with the less successful or less favoured disciples of the muse.

The poems inscribed to the memory of her father and brother afford a pathetic testimony of her relative affections. To the *former*, which has been already inserted, it is here thought proper to add the *latter*.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY BELOVED BROTHER*,

Who died suddenly at Leghorn in Tuscany, December 7, 1790.

IF 'tis the lot of mortal eye to scan,
In YOUTH's auspicious dawn, the mind of MAN;

* John Darby, Esq. then President of the British Factory at Leghorn.

If, from the scions shooting round the tree,
The speculative sense the fruit may see;
Then let Experience own the picture true,
Which, in his MORN OF LIFE, HOPE'S pencil drew;
Which promis'd through this toilsome scene to claim
The wreath of Virtue, twin'd by honest Fame!

Oh! FONDLY LOV'D! lamented and admir'd!
Still feeling cherishes what Worth inspir'd!
SUPERIOR WORTH! that triumph'd to the last,
Though Sorrow weeps to know that triumph past:
Still Truth delights to trace the pensive line
On Fame's bright page, in character divine!
Round the cold Urn, bedew'd with sacred tears,
Unfading still, her votive wreath appears;
There shall the angel Pity spread her wing,
And there the Muse of Melody shall sing;
And there the Cherub Choir shall list her lays,
And tune their harps to iterate his praise.

Oh! Consolation sweet! that guides the soul
On Hopes fair bosom, to its destin'd goal!
That points Hereafter to the wand'rer's eye,
While Faith looks smiling to the promis'd sky

Where Virtue's Star shall shed its rays sublime,
When worlds shall perish, 'midst the wrecks of
Time!—

Oh! could the feeble pow'rs of Mem'ry paint,
The living Model, or the dying Saint!
His firm integrity, his feeling breast,
His manly form, by all the Graces drest!
The Muse should pour her Pæans o'er his tomb,
And, with her sparkling tears, bid flowrets
bloom!
Flowrets the fairest freshest of their kind,
Pure as his soul, and perfect as his Mind!

When Fate's keen arrow, wing'd with sudden force,
Aim'd at his breast, unconscious of remorse;
While round his knees his smiling Infants hung,
And soothing Love unchain'd each prattling
tongue;
While the fair partner of each social hour
Read in his eyes the triumphs of her power,
The fond approving glance, the smile serene,
That mark'd with joy the dear domestic scene,
Oh, Death! thy mandate had thy Victim
known,
He would have wept their lot, and not his
own!

The spotless Soul anticipates the sky,
While only coward baseness fears to die.

To sympathy's unerring feelings true,
In him the Child of Want a Patron knew;
No flatt'rer's praise his modest worth requir'd,
By all respected, and by all admir'd!
With meek Philanthropy, untouch'd by art;
With honest Pride, that dignifies the heart;
With fine affections, warm, yet ever even,
He form'd on earth a transitory Heav'n!
No ostentatious verse the Muse shall give,
No pompous line to bid his virtues live;
Superior praise shall decorate his Name;
For truth, untutor'd, guides the hand of Fame!

THE productions of Mrs. Robinson; both in prose and verse, are numerous, and of various degrees of merit: but to poëtry the native impulse of her genius appears to have been more peculiarly directed: even in the earliest of her productions, that fertility of imagination and correctness of taste, were indicated which, in her subsequent compositions, are so eminently displayed. The sweetness and harmony of her versification has been scarcely equalled, and certainly never surpassed, by any contemporary poet: neither, while attending to the flow and melody of her numbers, has Mrs.

Robinson been unmindful of the force and dignity of the sentiment expressed.

It has been before observed, that of the glitter and false taste exhibited in the *Della Crusca* correspondence she became early sensible: several of her poems, even at this period, before the public mind recovered from that species of intoxication which novelty seldom fails to excite, breathe a spirit of just sentiment and simple elegance, which genius combined with feeling only can produce: of this her *Maniac* and her first *Ode to the Nightingale* afford examples. Her ingenuous muse soon learned to disdain the meretricious glare of perpetual ornament, false sublimity, and strained allusions; while it collected from the treasures of nature a rich store of imagery, and a happy series of illustrations, which, intro-

duced with judgment, applied with taste, and expressed with fervor, diffuse throughout her compositions a lustre and genuine glow, which never fail to kindle into enthusiasm the affections of the reader.

Purity, simplicity, and pathos, are the characteristics of those stanzas and sonnets, of Mrs. Robinson, which are connected with the sentiment of love. In the *Lines addressed to Him who can understand them**, are to be found, with a peculiar delicacy of feeling, all the appropriate and touching expressions of simple eloquence and undissembled passion. The *Stanzas written between Dover and Calais, in July*, 1792†, are of a similar description. They breathe a melancholy

* Mrs. Robinson's Poems, vol. i. p. 61.

† Vol. ii. p. 70.

tenderness, that melts the heart and appeals irresistibly to its affections. The poem also in the second volume, addressed *To* ———*, is a beautiful, impressive, and forcible amplification of the motto prefixed to it:

"I will instruct my SORROWS to be PROUD;"

while the Anacreontic, by which it is immediately preceded, revels in the promises of hope, and is fraught with the fullness of the imagination. Mrs. Robinson has been complimented with the title of the English Sappho; but, if in tenderness, elegance, feeling, and poetic imagery, her productions scarcely yield to those of the Lesbian Muse, for chastity of sentiment, and delicacy of expression, the palm must undoubtedly be allotted

* Mrs. Robinson's Poems, vol. ii. p. 85.

to our fair countrywoman. In the poem entitled "*Ainsi va le Monde,*" Mrs. Robinson is at once the animated eulogist of Mr. Merry's talents, the dignified assertor of her own, and the graceful and intrepid champion of Freedom, which, in the following lines, is thus beautifully described:

Through all the scenes of Nature's varying plan,
Celestial Freedom warms the breast of man;
Led by her daring hand, what pow'r can bind
The boundless efforts of the lab'ring mind?
The god-like fervour, thrilling thro' the heart,
Gives new creation to each vital part;
Throbs rapture through each palpitating vein,
Wings the rapt thought, and warms the fertile brain;
To her the noblest attributes of Heav'n,
Ambition, valour, eloquence, are giv'n.
She binds the Soldier's brow with wreaths sublime,
From her expanding Reason learns to climb;

To her the sounds of Melody belong,
She wakes the raptures of the Poet's song;
'Tis god-like Freedom bids each passion live,
That Truth may boast, or patriot Virtue give;
From her the Arts enlighten'd splendours own,
She guides the Peasant—she adorns the Throne;
To mild Philanthropy extends her hand,
Gives Truth pre-eminence, and Worth command;
Her eye directs the path that leads to Fame,
Lights Valour's torch, and trims the glorious flame;
She scatters joy o'er Nature's endless scope,
Gives strength to Reason—ecstacy to Hope;
Tempers each pang Humanity can feel,
And binds presumptuous Power with nerves of steel;
Strangles each tyrant Phantom in its birth,
And knows no title—but SUPERIOR WORTH.

In this poem, though composed with singular rapidity, no rugged lines or negligent expression are discover-

able: it has, on the contrary, been commended, by the critics, for the regularity of its construction, and the flow of its numbers. *Ainsi va le Monde*, and *The Maniac*, are perhaps the foundations upon which the lofty edifice of Mrs. Robinson's poetic fame has been constructed.

The poem on *Sight*, inscribed to Mr. John Taylor, which contains some grand and awful descriptions, is an admirable specimen of Mrs. Robinson's excellence in the composition of blank verse. The *Monody* to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, from which we cannot resist giving an extract, is replete with beauty and pathos:

"O! if the graces of pathetic verse
Can add one trophy to thy sable hearse;

If the soft sympathy of Sorrow's strain
Can, for a moment, soothe the throb of pain;
Can check the drop that steals from Mem'ry's eye,
Or calm Affliction's meek and melting sigh;
Where is the Muse? Why sleep the tuneful throng,
While BRITAIN'S RAFAELLE claims the grateful song!

Ye solemn mourners, who, with footstep slow,
Prolong'd the sable line of public woe;
Who, fondly crowding round his plumed bier,
Gave to his worth th' involuntary tear;
Ye children of his School, who oft have hung
On the grac'd precepts of his tuneful tongue;
Who many an hour in mute attention caught
The vivid lustre of his polish'd thought*!
Ye, who have felt, for ye have taste to feel,
The magic influence o'er your senses steal,

* Vide Sir Joshua Reynold's Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy.

When, eloquently chaste, from Wisdom's page
He drew each model for a rising age!
Say, is no kind no grateful tribute due
To him, who twin'd immortal wreaths for you!
Who, from the dawn of youth to manhood's prime,
Snatch'd hidden beauties from the wings of Time;
Who gave new lessons to your wond'ring sight,
Drawn from the chaos of oblivious Night;
Where, chain'd by Ignorance, in Envy's cave,
The Art he courted found a chilling grave;
Where native Genius faded, unadmir'd,
While Emulation's glorious flame expir'd;
Till REYNOLD's, braving ENVY's recreant spell,
Dragg'd the huge monster from her thorny cell;
Who, shrinking from his mild benignant eye,
Subdued, to Stygian darkness fled,—TO DIE!

The series of legitimate sonnets, by Mrs. Robinson, to which is prefixed a spirited preface, with bio-

graphical anecdotes of the Lesbian Poetess, abound with picturesque and classical images and allusions; while, with the magic influence of rich and melodious numbers, they trace the progress and the conflicts of a hopeless and fatal passion through its gradations, from fervent emotion to the sullen calm of *despair*.

The Introductory Sonnet contains a beautiful Address to Poetry—

"In varying cadence eloquently chaste."

The second Sonnet to Chastity, in which a perfect and sublime picture is presented to the mind, has been deservedly quoted for its descriptive splendour. In the 41st and 42d Sonnets, the climax of Sappho's fortune and fate is affectingly pourtrayed.

Mrs. Robinson at length forsook, for a time, the plaintive melody of song, to emulate, in her volume of Lyrical Tales, the Pindaric flights of contemporary poets. *The Trumpeter* excels in the playful gaiety of its manner, and the poignancy of its satire; while *the fate of Mrs. Gurton's cat* is humorously told, and affords an admirable lesson both to patrons and dependants. There are in the same volume several serious poems of extraordinary merit. *The Lascar Boy*, *The Alien Boy*, *The Old Singing Dame*, and *The Widow's Home*, are not inferior in sentiment, feeling, and simplicity, to the most admired of Mrs. Robinson's productions; and *The Haunted Beach* is a rich effusion of genius, leaving common objects and common means, to indulge in the

combinations of its own *creative* powers.

To characterize each peculiar species of beauty, exemplified in the varieties of Mrs. Robinson's poetical compositions, would be to forestal the judgment of the reader, to anticipate his pleasure, and to exceed the limits of the present design. To the genuine disciple of the muse, who has a mind to comprehend, taste to appreciate, and a *heart* to feel the productions of native genius, polished by cultivation, it can scarcely be necessary to say more: while, to those who can peruse without interest, or with languid attention, the examples already given, to enlarge on the subject would be to profane it.

The following beautiful Pastoral Elegy was written in remembrance of our charming Poetess, by P. PINDAR, Esq.

A PASTORAL ELEGY

ON

THE DEATH OF MRS. ROBINSON.

FAREWELL to the NYMPH of my heart!
Farewell to the cottage and vine!
From *these*, with a tear, I depart,
Where pleasure so often was *mine*.

REMEMBRANCE shall dwell on her smile,
And dwell on her lute and her song;
That sweetly my hours to beguile,
Oft echoed the valleys along.

Once more the fair scene let me view,
The grotto, the brook, and the grove:
Dear valleys, for ever adieu!
Adieu to the DAUGHTER of LOVE!

TRIBUTARY LINES

ADDRESSED TO

MRS. ROBINSON,

During her Lifetime,

BY

DIFFERENT FRIENDS.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE LATE GENERAL BURGOYNE.

LAURA, when from thy beauteous eyes
  The tear of tender anguish flows,
Such magic in thy sorrow lies,
  That every bosom shares thy woes.

When on thy lovely perfect face
  The sportive dimpled smile we see,
With eager hope the cause we trace,
  And wish to share each bliss with thee.

For in thy highly polish'd mind
  Superior charms so sweetly blend
In each, such gentle grace we find,
  E'en Envy must thy worth commend.

For who can gaze upon thy lip,
  That coral lip of brightest hue,
Nor wish its honied balm to sip,
  More fresh, more sweet than morning dew?

But when the sweet poetic lays
  Pierce to the heart's remotest cell,
We feel the conscious innate praise
  Which feeble language fails to tell.

So melting is thy lute's soft tone,
  Each breast unus'd to feel desire,
Confesses bliss before unknown,
  And kindles at the sacred fire.

So pure, so eloquent thy song,
  So true each precept it conveys,
That e'en the SAGE shall teach the YOUNG
To take their lesson from thy lays

And, when thy pen's delightful art
  Paints with soft touch LOVE's tender flame,
Thy verse so melts and mends the heart
  That, taught by thee, we prize his name.

Oh! mistress of each yielding heart,
  Accept the verse, to GENIUS due;
No flatt'ry can that Bard impart
  Who dares address his vows to you.

FEB. 1, 1791.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE LATE RICHARD TICKLE, ESQ.

AS Lesbos Sappho boasted, first in fame!
So peerless Muse thy verse adorns our shore;
So future Bards shall celebrate thy name,
E'en till this sea-girt Isle shall be no more!

Then mock the venal titles of a day,
Nor mourn of worldly gifts a niggard store;
Thy genius shines with such a vivid ray
As makes the gems of Fortune dimly poor!

For when in shrouded dust the dull and vain
Shall moulder, lost, forgotten and unknown;
The pensive eye shall pore upon thy strain,
And thy illustrious talents proudly own!
Then smile, and feel thyself supremely great,
And leave to little souls the pomp of idle state.

LINES TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY PETER PINDAR, ESQ.

Borrowing her Lap-dog to paint his Picture.

FROM her, who sweeps the sapphic lyre,
Come, pretty Cur, whom I admire;
A moment quit her fond embrace;
Yes, little creature,—haste away—
Whate'er thy name—Bijoux—or Tray,
And let me paint thy mop-like face!

O, tell thy Mistress, if she chuse
Her idle moments to amuse
With my shock-poll instead of thine,
She's welcome—up—or in her bed,
To smooth my ears, and pat my head!
And bid me on her breast recline!
Were this to happen, I should be,
O Cur! a happier dog than thee.

THE ANSWER.

BY MRS. ROBINSON.

O, PETER! since thy sportive Muse
A Puppy for her theme doth chuse,
  How envied must his race of brothers be?
How will their "mop-like" tresses flow:
How will their crops and long ears glow,
  When crown'd by GENIUS, Peter, and BY THEE?

But thou, THE MUSES watch-dog, Peter,
Who soar'st the highest, with thy metre,
  Thou never wou'dst a servile state survive;
Thou wouldst not wear a puppy's chain,
But, treating bondage with disdain,
  Might'st hope to lead, when I might wish to drive.

Then, Peter, boast a nobler fate,
Nor envy SHOCK'S inglorious state;

For, know, the puppy species—I despise!
With thee, I'll wander, wake, or dream,
By HELICON'S immortal stream,
Which PETER'S deathless fame supplies!

But if, in sportive vein, you seek
To paint a puppy's whisker'd cheek,
My little favourite shall your LEVEE grace:
For oft, if they are not belyed,
At levees—in due pomp and pride,
The highest patronize the FAWNING race.

My dog has something more to boast;
He scorns the cringing sneaking host,
And looks to lasting wreaths by Genius twin'd;
Since PETER, with his magic help,
Will keep in countenance the whelp,
And prove the painter, like the puppy, kind!

BY S. J. PRATT, ESQ.

O, IF thy pensive Muse can tell
The story of her woes so well!
If thus the anguish of thy lyre
Can more than Mirth's gay notes inspire!
If more of gentle pleasure lies
In the soft magic of thy sighs;
—If, as thy plaintive tale we hear,
More wisdom flows with every tear,
Than ever Joy's ecstatic power,
To Folly brought in Rapture's hour;
If thus thy tuneful griefs impart
A charm that melts and mends the heart;
And if, as round the trembling strings,
Thy PHILOMEL more softly sings
In LAURA's verse than in the grove,
Ev'n on the night she lost her love;—
Ah! who can wish the bird, or thee,
From such sweet sorrow wholly free?

Or who that heard thee once complain
But listens for the sounds again?
Yet who, that sees thy gentle breast
In LIFE'S FAIR PRIME DEPRIV'D OF REST,
That hears thee tell, in truth-taught lays,
" How full of grief have been thy days!"
But would thy magic verse forego,
Could silence ease thy weight of woe!
Yet to the Muse since powers belong
—For such the force of sacred song!—
To calm Misfortune's troubled mien,
And give " the patient smile serene,"
" Till by its blest and cheering ray
" The clouds of sorrow fade away,"
O, may the nightingale and thee
Still share our tender SYMPATHY,
Which join'd to thy responsive strain,
May steal from both, "the thorn of pain!"

SONNET

BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

HAIL, pensive songstress, whose entrancing lay
So sweetly soothes the sadden'd soul to rest—
Pathetic sov'reign of the tender breast,
Gentle as Eve, and lustrous as the day.

Whether to plaintive groves thy fancy lead,
To hermit's cave, or mountain's trembling height,
The battle's sanguine plain, or peaceful mead,
Still the fond MUSE attends thy fervid flight.

DESCRIPTION yields her pencil to thy hand,
That pencil fraught with ev'ry varying dye;
A new creation springs at thy command,
And brighter beauties catch thy ravish'd eye.
Ah! since o'er other hearts so potent known,
WHY SADLY DOOM'D TO SINK BENEATH THY OWN?

1790.

BY THE SAME.

ENCHANTING Laura! thy resistless spell
In sweetest thraldom holds the willing soul;
Breathing such strains from thy melodious shell,
That sternest natures own thy soft controul.

Too partial seem'd the lot by Heav'n assign'd
To thee, dear mistress of the plaintive lyre,
The perfect form, and the transcendant mind,
Beauty's soft charm, and FANCY's brightest fire.

Yet, in thy glowing youth's delicious bloom,
With varied merit so supremely grac'd,
Thy GENIUS, beauty, SENTIMENT, and TASTE,
By sickness whelm'd in Sorrow's hopeless gloom,
Poor is the solace, that exulting FAME
Has join'd with HIGHEST BARDS THY EQUAL NAME.

1792.

BY THE LATE

ROBERT MERRY, ESQ.

Member of the Academy Della Crusca at Florence.

SWEET is the calmly-cheerful hour,
When from mute Midnight's ebon tow'r
The moon escapes, and sportive flies
O'er the gay region of the skies,
Where NATURE's noblest flow'rs unfold
Their starry buds of burning gold;
The weary winds pant on the deep,
Or 'mongst the cradling billows sleep;
The streams their lucid lakes display;—
The forests shake their sighs away;
Soft lustre every shade pursues
That darkly drinks the falling dews;
While Odour from her silken wings
An aromatic ether flings:—
All is delight!—but ah! in vain
These varying glories bless the plain;

For see the frenzied lover speeds
From the bright groves and glitt'ring meads,
From gaudy hills, enchanted bow'rs,
And flowing waves, and scented show'rs,
And seeks the lonely pensive cave
Where he may groan, and weep, and rave;
And wraps his thoughts in sablest gloom,
And lures a transport from the tomb,
Where he may hope to rest at last,
When Passion's rending pangs are past.
But O! if then he chance to hear
The warblings of the bird sincere,
Who loves her secret pangs to throw
In all the melodies of woe—
His heart relents, his trembling lid
In Pity's pearly veil is hid;
Subjected agonies depart,
And soft'ning sorrow soothes his heart.
So I, dear LAURA! long supprest
The thorn of anguish in my breast,

Lost to each social solace gay,
And heedless of the blooms of May ;
And heedless of the haughty sun,
When, to his mad meridian run,
He lifts his red refulgent shield
And fires the Heav'ns eternal field :—
Yes I, from each allurement fled,
To where incumbent darkness spread,
Trod the black torrent's gloomy side,
And held fierce converse with the ti de.
Oh ! then thy numbers seiz'd my soul ;
I found the thrilling sadness roll
In sweet similitude of joy,
That might my direst griefs destroy.
They stole upon my tranced sense,
As the fresh gales of morn dispense
New life to every shrub that fades
In Solitude's neglected shades.—
Transcendent Laura ! now receive
The tribute Gratitude shall give,

Due to thy verse—whose sainted glow
Bade my weak soul renounce its woe:
Then frown not on my daring lay
That strives to paint the golden day;
To tell the lustre of the rose,
And thy resistless charms disclose;
But think, when in the grave's cold sleep
My wretched eyes shall cease to weep,
And troubled by the wint'ry breeze,
This sad this burning heart shall freeze—
Then shall my ling'ring verse declare
How much I priz'd thee, good and fair!
What tenderness my soul conceiv'd,
How deeply for thy suff'rings griev'd,
While future Poets future ages join
To pour in Laura's praise their melodies divine.

1790.

TO MRS. ROBINSON,

On her visiting Bath, in ill Health.

BY JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

MARIA from the busy circle flies
To breathe the purer bliss of brighter skies;
Forsakes the scene of her expanding fame,
To renovate the failure of her frame;
Mentally perfect—her enlighten'd MIND,
Superior to disease, springs unconfin'd!
Ranges the regions of the Muses reign,
Exempt from our inheritance of PAIN—
And, while keen pangs oppress her lovely face,
Wings the pure ETHER of poetic space;
Floats in the fragrance of the rubied ROSE,
And shuts its bosom up in rich repose!
So may these lines possess the placid pow'r
To soothe thy suff'rings in some torturing
hour.

BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

WHEN Ev'ning spreads her modest grey,
And wraps in gloom the silent grove,
Perchance, upon the lonely spray,
Some bird may twitter notes of love.

But when the deep'ning shadows grow,
If love-lorn PHILOMEL complain,
In sympathy of melting woe,
The bird entranc'd resigns her strain.

So I, when mute thy magic lyre,
My feeble lays may fondly pour;
But strike again thy dulcet wire,
At once I'll listen and adore.

Nov. 16, 1791.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE LATE REV. WILLIAM TASKER.

On reading her History of SAPPHO *and* PHAON *in a Series of Sonnets.*

WHEN SAPPHO, from the lofty steep,
O'erwhelm'd with dire despair,
Plung'd headlong down the foaming deep
To end her hopeless care;

VENUS, who saw the tuneful maid
Bend o'er the yawning grave,
Sent her own son the nymph to aid—
He came too late to save!

But, as her trembling spirit rose
To seek its calm abode,
VENUS, in pity to her woes,
This gentle boon bestow'd:

No more the victim of despair
   Shall SAPPHO's spirit rove;
But on the earth divinely fair,
   Claim every gazer's love:

In thee the wond'rous Nymph appears
   More tuneful, more divine;
She brings fresh music from the spheres,
   For oh! her lyre is thine.

STANZAS

BY MRS. ROBINSON.

THE chilling gale that nipt the rose,
Now murmuring sinks to soft repose;
The shad'wy vapours sail away,
Upon the silv'ry floods of day:
Health breathes on every face I see,
But, ah! she breathes no more on me!

The woodbine wafts its odours meek,
To kiss the rose's glowing cheek;
Pale Twilight sheds her vagrant showers,
To wake Aurora's infant flow'rs:
May smiles on every face I see,
But, ah! she smiles no more on me!

Perchance, when youth's delicious bloom
Shall fade, unheeded in the tomb,

Fate may direct a Daughter's eye
To where my mould'ring relics lie;
And, touch'd by sacred sympathy,
That eye may drop a tear for me!

Betray'd by love, of hope bereft,
No gentle gleam of comfort left,
Bow'd by the hand of sorrow low,
No pitying friend to weep my woe,
Save her, who spar'd by Heav'n's decree,
Shall live to sigh, and think on me!

Oh! I would wander where no ray
Breaks through the gloom of doubtful day;
There would I court the win'try hour,
The ling'ring dawn, the midnight show'r;
For cold and comfortless shall be
Each future scene—ordain'd for me!

THE ANSWER.

BY JAMES BOADEN, ESQ. A. M.

O CEASE, sweet Nymph, the crimson'd rose
To envy thus her short repose,
For soon her odours burst away,
And terminate in shrunk decay:
Nor thus deplore that health you see,
Which bathes the brows of all—but thee.

When Health displays her purple wing,
And Joy and Youth exulting spring;
When not a transient frown appears,
To cloud the lustre of their years,
Then does not love the gazer see
With keenest anguish sigh for thee?

And does not Health mislead the mind,
To flowery regions solely bind,

Blunt all the lessons of the sage,
And make us mock at distant age?
Has keen Affliction's searching fang
Brought thee no blessing in her pang?

Pain is the med'cine of the mind;
In every throb some balm we find,
Which brings the airy trifler, Man,
To ponder o'er his slender span.
Even dark back-wounding Calumny
Has been medicinal to me.

Since thus condemn'd to base abuse,
'Tis wise to turn the ill to use;
Think that abuse is Merit's test,
Assailing all Creation's best,
Th' inverting mirror of Despair,
Which turn'd, discovers what we are.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

This Sonnet appeared in The Oracle of Oct. 15, 1798.

Signed "IL AMANTE TIMIDO."

ANONYMOUS.

IN dreary Midnight's lonely hour,
When wretched lovers only wake,
Ten thousand tears, fast dropping, pour,
And bathe this bosom FOR THY SAKE!

When Morning's misty eye uncloses,
And gives the world another day,
For thee (more sweet than vernal roses)
Ten thousand sighs are breath'd away!

But he, whose scalding tears are flowing—
Whose aching heart heaves many a sigh;
Whose soul, with fondest LOVE is glowing,
Must hide HIS HEART'S FIRST wish—and die!

BY THE LATE

ROBERT OLIPHANT, ESQ.

Of Trinity College, Cambridge.

ADMIR'D and lovely, as the Paphian maid,
Bright Beauty's model, Love's bewitching form!
Ah! gentle LAURA, there in smiles array'd,
My flinty heart to tender hopes can warm;

Unpitied must he grieve, who loves thee so?
Say, must he steal subdu'd from every eye?
Ah! if condemn'd to bear this load of woe,
Say but "DESPAIR"—and bid thy victim die.

Some pity then will from thy lips depart,
Some comfort visit him, who loves but thee;
Who feels thy beauty wind about his heart—
And struggling pants for Death to set him free.
Yet, since thy cruel breast refus'd to save,
I only ask one tear to glisten on my grave.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE LATE HONOURABLE JOHN ST. JOHN.

WHEN Sensibility and Truth unite
　To give thy thoughts, with sweet poetic art,
'Tis genuine NATURE dictates what you write;
　And every line's a TRANSCRIPT OF THE HEART!

'Tis Grace and Feeling, polish'd by the MUSE,
　To claim applause, and charm a wond'ring throng:
Then who the sacred LAUREL shall refuse
　To her—whom NATURE form'd THE QUEEN OF SONG?

ADDRESSED TO MRS. ROBINSON,

BY THE LATE JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.

On reading a little Welch Ballad in MS. entitled LEWIN *and* GWYNNITHE.

THOU pride of a nation where genius is
bless'd,
Where THE MUSE smiles, by fancy and elo-
quence dress'd,
Sweet Minstrel! whose plaintive and elegant
mind
Is the temple of WIT and of PITY combin'd,
O! ne'er let the pen sleep in silence, whose
lays
Claim the young budding laurel, a nation's
just praise:
Exert thy soft skill, and from Phœbus receive
That wreath which THE GOD SHALL TO EXCEL-
LENCE GIVE.

LINES BY MRS. ROBINSON.

Written on the Recovery of her Daughter from Illness.

Supposed to be an Invocation to * OBERON.

LIGHTLY on the breath of Morn,
See the shades of twilight borne,
See the Sun, in splendour drest,
Lifting high his golden vest:
Earth receives him bath'd in tears,
Sprinkled by the starry spheres,
While the chilly pale-cheek'd moon
Journies to her "highest noon."—

Hark! a plaintive voice I hear,
Whisp'ring to my pensive ear,
"OBERON," it seems to say,
"Gentle Fairy haste away;

* See Midsummer Night's Dream.

" Haste on Health's ambrosial wing,
" Freshest dews of morning bring,
" Such as in HELVETIA's bow'rs,
" Gently fan the AUSTRAL show'rs.

" Swift as thought, dear spirit, fly;
" Wake to joy my Mary's eye;
" Now with perfumes bathe her breast,
" Now compose her pangs to rest:
" Haste, exert thy magic pow'r;
" Danger lurks in every hour."

From the tulip's ample dome,
Anxious mourner, see I come!
Now behold my filmy vest
Gay, with gaudy cowslips drest.
See the kingcup's burnish'd bell
Half my dainty brows conceal!
See my acorn goblet fill'd
With drops of ETHER thrice distill'd:

Wings I've stolen, of rainbow dye,
From the vagrant butterfly!
Myrtle leaves my sandals are,
Tied with strings of golden hair!
Now I top the beacon's head;
Now I skim o'er Ocean's bed,
Ere the SUN, with burning eye,
O'er the welkin's brow shall fly;
Or with fiery pinions sweep
Proudly down the western steep;
Or his burnish'd mantle fling
O'er the dauntless eagle's wing!
Ere, upon the world below,
Ev'ning's crimson blushes glow,
Fair MARIA's fev'rish lip
Shall HYGEIA's balsam sip.
Many a verdant leaf I bear,
Gifted with perfections rare!
These shall sprinkle precious balm,
Every throbbing pulse to calm;

Round about her aching head
Many a healing drop I'll shed:
From her pale and alter'd face
Health the sickly hue shall chase;
Health, that thro' the bosom glows
And bathes the cheek—A LIVING ROSE!
Still, where'er the damsel strays
Thro' dull life's perplexing maze,
Watchful OBERON shall be
GUARDIAN OF HER DESTINY.

ANSWER.

BY JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

SCENE—*The Fairy Bower.*

TITANIA *awakes.*

MY OBERON, ah! whither fled?
Leav'st thou thus my primrose bed,
The earliest of our rustic bow'rs,
Won from slow Time's wint'ry hours?
Now, when rouzing from their sleep,
The Elfin train their revels keep,
And Nature every bud unbinds,
Bursting from the dusky rinds
Of many a tree? My Fairies rise,
Pursue the Monarch as he flies:
O! trace his vagrant feet afar,
Where, lit by yonder am'rous star,
He steals him to some rival maid,
Of MAN—of MAN alone afraid!

Who takes, unthinking, to her breast
The Fairy King—O sting her rest,
Let her view trembling in her tears,
A shadowy band of busy fears;
Of slighted love, of hope destroy'd,
Affection by possesion cloy'd.

Enter Oberon.

Rash, rash, Titania, see me near;
Thy jealousy has drawn me here:
O slow to think that Pity's pow'r
E'er won me from our nightly bow'r.
How long with these, thy discontents,
Wilt thou disturb my fair intents?
Know, when the beetle's vesper's sung,
And the owl's dull curfew rung,
Compos'd last night thy ruffled breast,
And lock'd thee in unwilling rest,
A tender sigh smote on mine ear;
Alarm'd I woke, and turn'd to hear:

Sweet trembling notes immediate stole
Their harmony into my soul,
And bade me soothe A MOTHER's fears,
And dry her apprehensive tears:
I spy'd the meteor's blaze afar,
And darted on the glancing star;
Then like the lightning's flash I flew
Thro' chilling fields of dropping dew,
Till I had found the languid maid,
Pour'd on her breast soft Pity's aid,
Such as no *mortal* pain withstands:
I bath'd with dew her fev'rish hands,
And, pouring balm into her breast,
By fever's sickly damps opprest,
Restor'd to that terrestrial heaven
Its gentle beatings free and even—
Her bow with crystal lav'd bestow'd
The former lustre which it ow'd;
MARIA droops no more.——

TITANIA.

'Tis clear:
I see, how fond my doubts appear;
Yet do I know the Nymph as fair
As ever claim'd a fairy care:
But thou, my OBERON, forbear
For her to tread the pathless air;
Yet, that the maid our love may see,
Send aid—but let he messenger be me!

BY MRS. ROBINSON.

After successive and melancholy Dreams.

YE airy PHANTOMS! by whose pow'r
 Night's curtains shed a deeper shade,
Who, prowling in the murky hour,
 The weary sense with spells invade,

Why round the fibres of my brain
 Such desolating miseries fling;
And, with new scenes of mental pain,
 Chase from my languid eyes sleep's balm-dispensing wing?

Ah! why, when o'er the darken'd globe
 Exhausted NATURE fades to rest,
WHY, wrapp'd in Horror's ghastly robe,
 With shad'wy hand assail my breast?

Why conjure up a tribe forlorn
  To menace, where I bend my way;—
Why round my pillow plant the thorn,
  Or fix the demons dire, in terrible array?

Why, when the busy day is o'er,
  A day perhaps of tender thought!
Why bid my eager gaze explore
  New prospects—with fresh miseries fraught?

Why bid my madd'ning sense descry
  THE FORM, in silence, I ADORE!
His magic smile, his murd'rous eye,
  Then snatch me back to life—and bid me hope no more!

When fev'rish with the throbs of pain,
  And bath'd with many a scalding tear,
I close my cheated eyes again,
  Despair's wild bands are hov'ring near!

Now borne upon the yelling blast,
O'er craggy peaks I bend my flight;
Now on the yawning ocean cast,
I plunge unfathom'd depths, amid the shades of night.

Oft when the Morning's gaudy beams
My lattice gild with sparkling light!
O'erwhelm'd with agonizing dreams,
And bound in spells of FANCIED NIGHT,

I start; convulsive, wild, distraught;
By some pale MURD'ROUS poniard press'd,
Or by some grinning phantom caught,
Wake from the madd'ning grasp with horror-freezing breast.

Then down my cold and pallid cheek,
The mingling tears of joy and grief,
The soul's tumultuous feelings speak,
And yield my struggling heart relief.

I smile, to know the danger past:
But soon the radiant morning flies;
Soon is the transient day o'ercast,
And HOPE steals trembling from my languid eyes.

If thus, for moments of repose,
Whole hours of misery I must know;
If, when each sunny day shall close,
I must each gleam of peace forego;

If, for one little morn of mirth,
This breast must feel long nights of pain;
Oh, Life! thy joys are nothing worth;
Then let me sink to rest, and never wake again!

THE ANSWER.

BY JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

AH! why, o'er the couch where thy beauty reposes,
Do phantoms thus hold their despotic dominion?
There LOVE should expand the sweet shield of his pinion,
And fragrance thy pillow encompass with roses.

Not a heath but should whisper accession of pleasure,
And FANCY should people a world with new charms;
Dear Poesy's harp shou'd not vibrate alarms,
But deliciously mazes of harmony measure.

I would bid some clear SPIRIT with magic embrace
Defend thee from PHANTASIES hovering nigh,
Like the mist-rending SUN, with a glance of his eye,
These cloudy oppressions from Heaven to chace.

Yet OBLIVION, sweet friend! will not dare
thus to bind
Thy fancy so vivid, in slumber profound;
But delighted the fairy should wander around,
To regions of blessedness only confin'd.

The seraph, SUBLIMITY, there shall aspire
To touch thy sick thought with his torch
so divine;
The spark from the GOD shall enkindle the
shrine,
And blaze the bright flame of celestial fire.

Yet, to follow the track of our MILTON sublime
Should not draw thee from musings of
earthly estate,
Thy verse may yet reconcile Man to his fate,
And chear with thy numbers this perilous
clime:

It may teach us the language of Pity to move;
It may bid generosity flow thro' the soul;
Yet the passion it kindles it cannot controul,
Every line is an added incentive TO LOVE.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM TASKER.

HAIL, lovely songstress! whose enchanting lyre
Glows 'midst the radiance of Apollo's fire!
Whose chords revibrate at thy soft command,
Touch'd by the magic of an angel's hand;
Whose verse shall live while Genius charms the heart!
The English model of poetic art!

Sweet SAPPHO OF OUR ISLE! whose vivid ray
O'er saddest sorrow beams enliv'ning day!
And, borne upon the wings of streamy light,
Darts dazzling glory on the wond'ring sight;
Oh! if thy soul be tender as thy song,
True as thy fancy, as thy genius strong,
How blest that PHAON, whom the Fates design'd
To share, at once, thy beauties and thy mind.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

On the Second Volume of her Poems.

BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

AH! fain, dearest LAURA! my thanks would I pay,
For the treasures of GENIUS thy friendship bestows;
How poor are all thanks to the worth of thy lay,
Where the rich ORE of POESY lavishly flows!

To praise that rich ore, too, were equally vain:
What MUSE but thy own can its value impart?
Yet, when grateful simplicity offers the strain,
'Tis the only reward that is dear to thy heart.

Then take, dearest LAURA! the tribute sincere,
From a friend who admir'd thee in *Life's early hour,*
Who beheld in thy bloom the sweet promise appear,
That Time has matur'd to so LOVELY A FLOW'R.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

Presented with a Subject taken from her Sonnets; Sappho on the Rock of Leucata.

BY R. K. PORTER, ESQ.

TO her whose numbers flow with Sappho's name,
Who mourns her sorrows, and asserts her fame,
To her whose lyre, by taste and feeling strung,
With Lesbia's hapless Muse has pensive rung,
An humbler Sappho comes; too proud, if blest
By the approval of so soft a breast.—
O! could the pencil's touch those graces give,
Which in thy deathless lines have learn'd to live:
Could the dull canvas, kindling like thy lays,
Start into life, and snatch immortal bays:
Then pleas'd, delighted he who gave it life,
(Mixing the colours in harmonious strife)
Would lay the graceful tribute at thy feet,
Grand as thy soul, and as thy numbers sweet.

But not to me the glorious art is given
To sketch the fair resemblances of Heaven;
To give to genius her mind-darting eye;
To clothe young Love in his purpurial dye;
Or blest to catch alone sad Sappho's air,
Painting the awful phrenzy of Despair.
Ah! "Lesbian maid," tho' sweet as she who now
Repeats thy anguish, and renews thy vow:
Who melts in fondness o'er thy Phaon's form,
Or raves distracted in the midnight storm,
Tho' sweet as her's thy silver lyre resounds,
Tho' with such energies thy soul abounds,
Yet still the Fates those wond'rous charms deny,
That flash unnumber'd from our Sappho's eye!
O'er thy sad cheek no blushing lustres move,
That teach the heart to languish into love;
No lucid snow thy throbbing bosom veils;
No azure current thro' that bosom steals;
No sculptor gazes on thy finish'd frame,
Sickning with hopeless Envy's fatal flame;

Alas! the Gods such sacred gifts refuse,
And grant thee only mis'ry, and the Muse:
While, to OUR Sappho's form and brighter mind,
They give the charms of Heaven, the soul refin'd.
O! had they equal dealt to thee a share
Of British graces, to have made thee fair,
Phaon had constant prov'd, and all the woes
And all the love that from OUR Sappho flows;
All the sad tale with which thy lyre is strung,
And sadder fate, had yet remained unsung.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. ROBINSON,

On receiving an Invitation to pass some time with her in the Country.

BY PETER PINDAR, ESQ.

SAPPHO, I take thee at thy word,
And now accept thine invitation;
For when there's pleasure, by the LORD,
I never look for supplication.

At such poor prudery-mind I scoff—
Shew me a hobby-horse—I'm off—
Well! as I'm fond of peas and beans,
And cabbages, and K—s, and Q—s,
And as *near thee* those *vegetables* grow,
I'll soon be near old WINDSOR'S tow'rs,
And now and then some leisure hours
On critics, shrines, and shrine-mongers bestow;
And sometimes we will make a pretty ode,
When COURTS shall be the burthen, *alias* load.

We won't be rivals, tho', for fear
The same thing may again appear
Which happened once in Greece, in days of yore:
You recollect the well-known story,
How sweet COURINA, crown'd with glory,
The palm of verse from cousin PINDAR bore.
And as her talent shines in thee,
The Lord have mercy on poor me!

SONNET

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN BERESFORD.

FULL many a conflict hath my bosom prov'd,
To chase THY IMAGE from its dwelling there!
Full many a sorrow, many a tender care,
For thy dear sake I've suffer'd, BEST BELOV'D;
For since thy beauties did my heart invade,
Oft have I strove my liberty to gain;
Oft in soft solace to my am'rous pain,
For balm to heal the wounds which love has made,
I court the MUSES;—to assuage my grief,
Court sage PHILOSOPHY, for vain relief;
In quest of joy, I rove from FAIR TO FAIR;
Vain other charms! and vain PHILOSOPHY!
My vagrant heart must still return to thee,
And one dear SMILE IS WORTH AN AGE OF CARE!

LINES TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY ROBERT OLIPHANT ESQ.

QUEEN of the laurell'd lyre, whose classic hand
Can all the strings of magic sound command!
Whose fancy, grace, and energy conspire,
To match the lustre of a SAPPHO'S fire!
Whose taste to Britain's letter'd page shall give
A wreath new-born, to bid its glory live!
For every Muse shall lend her aid to bind
That verse, the speaking tablet of thy mind;
Then from an humble son of Phœbus, deign
To list the numbers of an artless strain,
Which oft beneath these * Gothic tow'rs were known
To feel the magic of thy melting tone.
For who insensible so long can be,
Whose soul enamour'd woos the MUSE and THEE.

* Mr. Oliphant was a Fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE LATE GEORGE REID, ESQ.

WHEN Laura, and Genius, and Beauty look gay,
And the Queen of Parnassus triumphantly smiles,
Each lacquey of Phœbus her merit reviles;
Like frogs in the fable,
They try what they're able,
To vex her, perplex her,
Abuse her, amuse her,
While she laughs at their envy, and not at their wit,
Till the poor little reptiles with jealousy split,
And before her true fire their dull vapours decay,
As the sun drives the shadows that frown on the day.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY ROBERT OLIPHANT, ESQ.

ABOUT Apollo's brow we're told
  A starry crown was wont to twine;
But now Parnassian Bards behold
  The *planet Venus* rules the Nine!

The handmaid Graces deck her form;
  To her, the Muses meekly bow;
The God of Genius lends each charm,
  And binds his laurel round thy brow.

BY CHARLES JAMES, ESQ.

Ah! friend, to dazzle let the vain design,
To raise the thought, or touch the heart, be thine.

Pope.

EXTEMPORE LINES.

On being asked what I thought of Mrs. Robinson's Poetry.

OF Epic grandeur I'd resign the lyre,
To sing as Love and Robinson inspire.
Heroic raptures may to others be
What native ease and softness are to me.
Ætherial splendours in the first appear;
The last by truth and sentiment endear.
By those the mind is dazzled with surprize!
These fill the soul with voluntary sighs!
Who sees the writer but a sigh reveals!
Who reads her dictates but a passion feels!

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY THE REV. PAUL COLOMBINE.

WHAT voice, attun'd to the soft Lesbian lute,
Breathes in this rugged clime such accents clear?
What British Sappho warbles through the year,
When ev'ry Grecian grove is lorn and mute?

The Muses and the Graces held dispute,
Which at her birth the blooming babe should rear:
Their blended gifts in her so bright appear,
Who would not strive to press the tender suit,
To win the beauteous prize? Where'er she moves,
Whene'er she speaks she fascinates each eye,
And winds around each heart: the tender loves,
With genius, taste, and varied harmony,
To breathe in her soft lay: hoar age approves,
While youth, fond youth, dissolves in extacy.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

THINK not thy numbers SAPPHO'S woes declare,
And all her fervid passion's fond excess,
Though thy rapt Muse's glowing strains express
Of LOVE'S sad victims each romantic care,
Warning weak hearts to shun the roseate snare;
Tho' PHŒBUS deigns thy tow'ring flights to bless,
And all his sons thy nobler pow'rs confess,
That o'er their highest aims sublimely dare.

No LAURA thus pre-eminently taught
Mellifluous warblings of the heav'nly train;
With Poesy's delightful magic fraught,
Yet other notes reveal'd the LESBIAN'S pain:
For, ah! had SAPPHO'S Muse such accents caught,
The faithless youth she had not woo'd in vain.

IMPROMPTU,

On Mrs. Robinson's *being present at the Performance of the Merchant of Venice at Covent Garden.*

BY THE LATE JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.

WHILST Macklin Shakespear's Shylock holds to view,
See beauteous Robinson out-act the Jew;
One pound of flesh his malice cou'd assuage,
Her Christian charms severer bonds engage:
When love-inspiring eyes their darts dispense,
Who meets the glance must expiate th' offence;
In vain applause wou'd pay the debt in part,
She claims the sacrifice of *every heart.*

Nov. 6, 1780.

EXTEMPORE,

Sent with a Pair of Gloves to S. J. Pratt, Esq.

BY MRS ROBINSON.

YOUR gloves I send,
My worthy friend,
With no gallant intent;
With gauntlet, I
No knight defy—
So take it—as 'tis meant.

In merry mood
'Tis understood—
That Frolic Fancy loves,
When eye-lids close
In sweet repose—
To steal a pair of gloves!

But, neither, here
(I vow and swear)
My sportive measures rule—
Too weak to wield
The daring shield,
Too old to play the fool.

Too dark their hue,
Their semblance true,
Like Fortune's frowns appear;
By absence torn,
Like me, they mourn
For him who thought them dear.

Then take the pair
And let them share
The warmth, that from your breast
On all bestows
The balm of woes—
Which gives, to sorrow—rest!

These truant twins,
To mend their sins,
Shall wait your kind command;
And ev'ry day,
Or sad,—or gay,
Shall take you by the hand.

So fare you well,
This pair shall tell,
And tell—" with lungs of *leather*,"
That friends, who part,
Must know the smart
They never feel together.

DEC. 17, 1797.

LINES ADDRESSED TO MRS. ROBINSON,

By the author of Hartford-Bridge, &c. &c.

During a Tour in the West of England, in June 1777.

THE seaman, from winds and the fury of seas,
Each harbour will bless where he anchors at ease;
Yet with fonder regard will he eye the wish'd strand,
Where his vessel is destin'd, and cargo must land,—
—So I, dear MARIA! on Life's ocean tost,
When I cannot keep sea, veer about for the coast,
And praise ev'ry harbour where shelter is found;
But thou art the Port where my wishes are bound.—
Those wishes accept,—and abhor'd may I be
If I ever fram'd wish that meant evil to thee!
While restless from region to region I roam,
My heart, still *untravell'd,* seeks thee as its home.

O yield it abode! and believe it, my fair,
Of this breast art thou *Tenant*,—none else harbour there;
There, sweet *Star* of beauty! thy dear image dwells,
Wings the fond pulse of passion, the sigh ever swells,
Gives a tide to the current that bathes the warm heart,
And grown to the soul, is become e'en a part!
O yield it abode!—bow, ye *Monks*, and be blest;
The *Heaven* I crave is a place in her breast.
And say, breathes a Monk, wou'd in secret reprove
A devotion,—so *true* to the altar of LOVE?
 Beshrew the cold Being, whom rigid and fell,
Nature forms a *Recluse*, and devotes to a cell;
Let him melt o'er his reliques, at beauty congeal
And Saints praise his apathy, Ideots his zeal:
With *love* in my heart, and with *thee* in my eye,
What *zeal* can *Divinity* equal supply!

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

FROM DR. WOLCOT.

TO tuneful SAPPHO *tuneless* PHAON sends,
Informing SAPPHO, who now sighs alone,
That he at eve, at ten o'clock, intends
To pick (with her kind leave) a mutton bone.

Then will we talk, and laugh, till MORNING peep,
And put a period to our prose and rhyme;
Thus steal, while all the stupid world's asleep,
Some golden feathers from the wings of Time.

To descend from my cloud, or my sublimities, or from Parnassus, or what you will, know that I mean, in plain English, to take tea with you; and if you will ask me to stay supper, *tant mieux*. I am erecting monuments to QUEENS and KINGS, for which *species* of *immortality* I expect *no thanks*. This moment, however, I am finishing an ODE to that amiable object the P—ss of W—. Not a Poet has hitherto summoned a MUSE to be eloquent in her praise.—Cowards! I dare.

Could one tender line draw the thorn from the bosom of Affliction, or alleviate its torture, I would hunt Parnassus for a month to find it. You see I do not hate every thing that appertains to royalty; and yet the million entertains that opinion.

You well know that G——'s daughters are great favourites—one is a POETESS, a second a PAINTRESS, a third a MUSICIAN, &c. so that B———m House is another little school of Athens. In short, they are, according to good information, totally divested of that overbearing *hauteur* so insufferable in their German grandmothers, models of good nature, gentleness, and affability. But how ridiculous, SAPPHO, for *me* to say this to *thee*, who art so much at home on the subject? Adieu; write verses—distance thy own sex, and give a jealousy to ours.

Chapel-Street, Portland-Place. May 30.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

DEAR SAPPHO,

THOU art in London, and yet in a solitude.—Heaven protect me from silence and

shade. I like the coach-wheel thunder of the great city of the world. How goes on your work? Heed not the critics—they are delving in the mud of their brains, perhaps for the same kind of ideas.—Write for fame; and pray, good Madam SAPPHO, to the wonderful flights of your imagination add a small *check-string*—I like your powers. There is a vividness of fancy in your poetry that pleases me; but do not suffer your fancy to *run riot*. Sublimity and bombast are in many instances *nearly allied*. A calm moment should be stolen from the bustle of poetical respiration, to decide what is sublimity and what bombast. I could give a tolerably clear definition of them, but I have not time. I am just in labour—The Spilsburys are preparing for the *accouchement*. The brat seems to be all alive and strong, and wants much to survey the world.

Have you seen the *hyper-criticisms* on my rhymes? They do me *honour*, though meant to *disgrace*. What a *set of fools* have I for my *foes!*

O world! thou art a d—mn'd queer chick;
Thy head, most *comfortably thick*,

Not to admire my ode's illumination!
Sing as I please in strains divine,
Work like a collier in the mine,
Still joins that world in PETER's condemnation.
Rail as it will, I'll calmly hunt my *fleas*;
And kill *when* and *wheresoe'er* I please.

I have just hit off two or three little songs for RAUZZINI, who, I think, composes charmingly. It is no affectation to admire Italian music—it is *nature*, it is *simplicity*, it is *elegance* itself. I try now and then to imitate them, but I feel myself a dray-horse attempting the light movements of the Arabian. Shall I give you the songs?—Here take them.

SONG I.

'TIS the voice of delight that I hear,
Of the nymph from our valley that stray'd;
I gave up all thoughts of the fair,
And sorrow'd in silence and shade.
No longer for bliss will I rove,
No boon from the Gods I implore
They gave me the girl of my *love*,
Oh! what can they offer me more?

SONG II.

THE CONFESSION.

GO, Colin, and boast of thy art,
  Of the flatt'ry that dwelt on thy tongue;
Go triumph, and say, a fond heart
  Was fatally lull'd by thy song.
Let me own I was won by thy guile,
  For, Shepherd, my love was *sincere*;
Tho' *thou* leavest thy *nymph* with a smile,
  She parts from her swain with a *tear*.

SONG III.

THE season of madness is past,
  My heart to its master returns,
Thy cruelty frees it at last,
  No longer a pris'ner it mourns.
Too long I complain'd of my woes,
  And patiently suffer'd thy chain;
To thy *beauty* I lost my repose,
  In thy *folly* I find it again.

Adieu.

J. WOLCOT.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE just heard that you have been exceedingly unwell: for God's sake do not be foolish enough to die yet, as you possess stamina for an hundred years, and a poetical mind that cannot be soon replaced. Leave Englefield Green then for London, and let us enjoy our usual laugh and whim. I am much older than you, and yet, I think the Devil at a great distance.

Death has not whisper'd in my ear,
" O Bard, to Kings and Queens so dear,
" Tho' much I like thy rhyming stuff,
" Thou really hast liv'd long enough;"
So quit thy verse and fav'rite maids,
For silence and my land of shades.

SAPPHO, SAPPHO, keep your mind easy—lock it up, and don't speak to it for a month. Think not of sorrow. What numbers fancy themselves undone, because they cannot command ten times more than they want. Were I to sigh for riches, it would be sighing for a

golden hook to cut my throat. Born with a parcel of *gentle* dispositions, I never could turn pleasure to the door. Adieu, my friend; live long, and court the Muse.

J. WOLCOT.

My best compliments to Miss Robinson.

No. 1, *Chapel-Street, Portland Place.*
Dec. 18, * 1800.

* Mrs. Robinson died on the 26th, eight days after.

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When I was Young, a story
The Granny Grey, a tale
On a Kiss
To Mrs. Meynell, on the Death of her Husband
Lines to an Infant sleeping, inscribed to Mrs. Fenwick, author of "Secrecy," a novel
To the Sun-Flower
To Him who Complains
To Time
The Fisherman

The Old Beggar
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A Summer's Day
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London's Summer Morning
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Fairy Rhymes
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Lines written during a Storm
Ode to S. T. Coleridge, Esq.
The Misanthrope
Beauty's Grave, inscribed to the Memory of the late Countess of Tyrconnel
The Savage of Aveyron, a poem.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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